Serfojee Rajah. 1827

AN

Authentic Narrative

OF THE

INVASIONS OF FRANCE,

IN 1814 AND 1815,

1390

COMPRISING

A CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL

OF THE

BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

BY M. DE BEAUCHAMP,

AUTHOR OF

THE HISTORY OF THE WAR OF LA VENDÉE,

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

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PREFACE.

It is doubtless a bold undertaking to publish an impartial history of the Invasions in 1814 and 1815. These great events have occurred under our eyes, and the chief actors in the drama still exist. Their passions are not cooled, their animosities are recent, and their prejudices are inveterate. What temerity, it may be said, thus to brave the difficulties, with which cotemporary history is always shackled, especially when its subject is a change of government! I am not blind to these objections, but I can oppose to them powerful authorities both in ancient and modern times.

A detestation of tyranny, a love of truth and veneration for the laws, are the motives which have induced me to describe these campaigns so fertile as to memorable actions, and decisive results. The political and military annals of

nations have never supplied such interesting subjects for the contemplation of mankind, as are united in the description of this astonishing epoch.

The detail comprehends numerous anecdotes and statements, which mark the characters of the Emperor Alexander, the Bourbons, Napoleon Buonaparte, &c.; while it includes, at the same time, the most affecting situations, the most importants events, and the most astonishing changes that were ever produced by the sword of war, or recorded by the pen of history.

The first wish of tyrants is to keep their slaves in ignorance, and to envelope criminal acts in mystery. Never did one of them better understand this art than the crafty Napoleon. Under his sway all the sources of truth were either poisoned, or dried up; but the veil which covered his iniquity, is torn away, and history, the mirror of truth, steps forward to record his crimes.

Is it not, however, attended with inconvenience and danger to depict the progress of tyranny, while its firmest supporters are still in existence, and in the full enjoyment of the wealth derived from their turpitude? Will not a description of the crimes and extravagances, by which this de-

plorable period has been distinguished, revive animosity, and rouse resentment? I answer—No. It is to fulfil the painful but necessary duty of the historian, who, without reference to party, dispassionately judges both of the monarch and his people. It is to make the past a wholesome lesson towards our conduct for the future, and thus to derive good from evil.

But who can say that the historian is really dispassionate, that he is influenced by no particularities and prejudices, and that his opinions are formed upon the principles of genuine independence? Have we not seen how the men of letters in France have for years conducted themselves? What reliance can be placed on their assertions? Has not every political publication long been a mercenary effusion, in support of despotism? Have not authors been the ready panegyrists of power, in whatever shape it appeared? Have we not seen them prostrate at the throne of an usurper, and deifying him in the hour of his prosperity; yet were they not the first to betray him when misfortunes overtook him?

These accusations are unfortunately too well founded; but they do not equally apply to every class of writers in the nation. On the contrary,

the exceptions are numerous, and as far as regards my personal refutation of the charge, I shall be frank and explicit.

A work, which I published on the war of La Vendée, subjected me to a long series of persecutions; but my hatred of tyranny was anterior to this, for it had its origin in my political principles; and I was, therefore, inimical to a system of government, which I conceived to be incompatible with all moral independence. Both before and after my exile, I had the opportunity of acting as many had previously acted. I might have taken the advice of persons high in office, have entered into a compromise with despotism, and have praised it in my publications: every thing invited me; but I found consolation, for refusing such vile offers, in solitude and study. Never did the tyrant obtain from me any thing beyond one of those vague submissions, extorted by a threat of proscription and imprisonment. This spirit of independence was not likely to procure me decorations, and other marks of Imperial favor. I can, therefore, without derogating from the laws of honor and gratitude, subject the government of the Corsican to the test of truth; having accepted no marks of distinction from him, when

Fortune had placed him on the highest pinnacle.

Painful as I may have found it to make some observations, which occur in the following pages, truth elicited them; and a conscientious conviction of their accuracy guided my pen. I have compared the official bulletins of the Germans, English, French, and Russians; but these studied relations are always incomplete, when they are not partial. An author, in availing himself of them, should use extraordinary caution, and exercise all his discernment. These bulletins form, as it were, the outline of history; but the substance and colours are only to be found in private accounts, confidential communications, and notes by absolute witnesses of the transactions alluded to, whose respectability is surety that their evidence may be relied upon. Of such materials and documents I have been able to avail myself largely; and they form the basis of the present work. So great indeed has been the mass of authentic information thus acquired, that I can confidently announce my publication to be the most exact and complete detail of the great events connected with the invasion, which has been submitted to the public. I could easily quote the names of several distinguished characters, from

whom I have been supplied with most valuable information; but particular considerations, and in several instances excess of modesty, on the part of those who have favored my undertaking, do not permit me to make my public acknowledgments. Among these friends are many officers in every department of the French army—an army, which has been the boast of our nation and the admiration of Europe, and which, under the legitimate government of our good king, will distinguish itself by actions, perhaps less brilliant, but of more real utility.

Such as my work is, I now consign it to the reader. May it answer his expectation! May it be so fortunate as to obtain some small degree of praise, and may those who criticise it be liberal! Of candid criticism I shall gladly avail myself, and the approbation of the Public will be the sweetest reward of my labours.

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AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

OF THE

INVASION OF FRANCE IN 1814,

&c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Character and Elevation of Napoleon Buonaparte—His Successes, his Tyranny, his Reverses—Summary of the principal Events which occurred during the Campaigns of 1812 and 1813—Confederation of the Monarchs and Nations of Europe, to overthrow the preponderance of Napoleon, and effect a general Peace.

EUROPE, which had often been disturbed by sanguinary revolutions, never exhibited, till in our days, the frightful spectacle of a monarchy sinking under the repeated blows of popular anarchy, after having existed fourteen centuries. A colossal Republic boldly elevated itself upon the ruins of the ancient throne of Clovis; and almost as suddenly became the prey of an audacious soldier. Transformed into an absolute empire, this focus of political disturbances oppressed and desolated Europe; stretching in a short time its threatening influence from the mouth of the Vistula to the banks of the

Tagus. The civilized world was on the point of being reduced to the most deplorable situation—an universal monarchy—when the invaded North dissipated the danger by a glorious resistance.—Europe, thus at length roused to opposition, presented the glorious spectacle of a coalition, cemented by morality, and a love of peace. It was then that three confederated sovereigns were seen, leading in person their numerous troops into the bosom of this vast empire, which had so lately been the terror of the world; and forcing a conqueror, who had made so many nations tremble, to defend the approaches towards his own capital. Assailed by the formidable armies of the European league, the French soldiers, ever famed for valour, yielded their territory inch by inch, performed prodigies, and animated by a feeling of national honor, braved death itself; shedding their blood not to establish the power of one man, but to protect the integrity of the state. Extraordinary invasions, astonishing marches—subjugated provinces—popular commotions—towns surprised—abandoned, or defended—numerous and sanguinary battles—heroic actions—alternate good and bad success—political negociations and military operations—untoward incidents—strange vicissitudes—all the nations of Europe in the arena—Paris menaced, delivered, attacked at all points, defended, and conquered by magnanimity—the power of an extraordinary and haughty despot dissipated like stormy clouds by the genial rays of the sun—an ancient monarchy

rising, as it were, out of its ashes, amidst the unanimous acclamations of France and Europe ——! Such is the mass of different events, which distinguished the memorable campaign of 1814.— Such has been the happy termination of the grand drama, which has held the universe in suspense. While the mind is still struck with the recollection of so novel a spectacle, it is my object in this work to collect the fleeting *traits*, by which it was distinguished, and to retrace all its scenes.— Such a publication cannot be premature, when Truth has resumed her empire. Besides, it affords such useful lessons, it calls to mind circumstances so worthy of being remembered, that my cotemporaries will not perhaps be displeased with me for having dared, in some degree, to anticipate the judgment of posterity.

First, then, let us cast a rapid glance towards the character and elevation of the celebrated personage, whose insatiable ambition has forced all Europe to take up arms against him.

When a neglect of our duties, a corruption of morals, an infatuation of the public mind, and a sort of disrelish as to every thing which constitutes human happiness, caused civil discord among us, we saw an irresistible revolution overturn every thing like a torrent, sacrifice a virtuous monarch, and run through all the modifications of popular government. According to the expression of the illustrious Pitt, the French had allowed Liberty so wide a range, that they themselves could no longer

hold her in controul. Still, France, even during the slumber of the laws, and while atrocious passions were mingled with patriotism—France displayed a high degree of military splendour, and her mighty forces defeated the coalitions, formed to deliver her from the monster of anarchy. At this we may be the less amazed, because the stimulus to action is never so strong in the people as during political disorder.

After seven years of war and convulsions, France found herself, in 1799, menaced by a still more formidable confederation, the success of which would have destroyed her independence. Baffled as she was in the North, and likely to lose her conquests in the South, disordered in the interior, drained as to finances, and disorganized as to administration, a few leaders of the French Revolution, fatigued by length of suffering, thought of at length reposing under the ægis of a single ruler. It was evident that this change would lead, by a natural transition, to a kind of military dictatorship. The offer was made to two commanders, who had distinguished themselves during the war. The one refused from a feeling of modesty—this was *Moreau*. The other, not having yet gained trophies equally brilliant, aimed at the command of an army; in hopes of conquering Italy, and arriving at power under the auspices of victory—this was *Joubert*. Fortune opposed him at Novi, and before the absolute loss of the battle, a mortal blow by an unknown hand deprived him of life. His death, which was

of a suspicious nature, animated the hopes of other candidates, and all were upon the alert when General Buonaparte landed on the coast of Provence, from the borders of the Nile. This ambitious Corsican, who was still young, had spread the reputation of his name through Europe, and even into Egypt.

Let us go back to the origin of his good fortune. Born with a natural obstinacy of character, a restless and lofty disposition, and an inflexible heart, Bonaparte, consumed by the fever of ambition, had availed himself of the means, afforded towards exaltation, by a day of tears and mourning. The blood of the Parisians was his first title to renown, and Italy his first prey. Gifted with an immense memory, an invincible determination, and an eye in battle that instantly discerned what was requisite, he subjected Fortune to his will, and she opened to him an easy road to dominion. Prodigal of the spoils of vanquished Italy, he had soon a party in France; and this was strengthened by the intoxication, which a warlike nation felt, in consequence of victories, appearing to border on the miraculous. But those, who were clear-sighted, suspected his secret views. It was not without uneasiness on their part, that this young commander affected to form in his army the *race des braves*, as if valour had not been the distinguishing *trait* of all the French armies. The peace, or rather a truce, which was also effected by him, gave still greater scope to his pretensions

It was then, whether through fear or prudence, that the principal members of Government determined upon removing him and his choicest troops to a distance, under the pretext of establishing the laws of liberty in the ancient dominions of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies. In fact, this measure was an honourable exile; and under his command sixty thousand French embarked for Egypt.

It was there that in the name of Liberty, Reason, and the Arts, the Conqueror of Italy bathed himself in the blood of the Egyptians, Turks and Mamelukes. Nevertheless, his military talents received a check, for the first time, beneath the walls of a Syrian town. Humbled at St. Jean d'Acre—without a fleet—without supplies—and almost without hope, Bonaparte learnt that France was again convulsed. The moment appeared to him propitious, for the accomplishment of his designs; and, betraying his army, he fled to seize upon the sovereign authority, supported by base magistrates, who proclaimed him their master, that they might continue in office.

No authority is more absolute than that of a Chief, who succeeds a Republic. In his hand is soon placed the whole power of the people, which they themselves had been incapable of regulating. Thus it was with Augustus, when he re-established order, that is in other words, when he enslaved his subjects—thus it was with Cromwell, who had to conquer the noble-spirited nature of the English—and thus it was with Buonaparte, who had

only to shew himself to a nation fatigued with anarchy, though aggrandized by conquests, and exalted by triumphs. As heir of the Revolution, and master of the several armies formed by able generals, he declared himself sole arbiter of the destinies of France, and immediately flattered every party. Under the modest title of Consul, he proclaimed himself the restorer of the laws, religion, and morality. With senseless arrogance he pretended to consider himself an instrument appointed by the decrees of Heaven, and declared to the Senate, at that time disposed towards servitude, that he was sent by the Power, from which every thing emanates, to re-establish on earth, order, justice, and equality.

So long as it was possible for him to be silent, and conceal his ambition, there was no sacred name which he did not profane, no elevated sentiment which he did not dishonour by rendering it subservient to his designs, no hope dear to humanity which he did not make his sport. Europe would have been lost, if to the insatiable love of authority and conquest he had united profound political judgment; but being a prey to violent passions, particularly anger, he soon ceased to have any rule or check in the exercise of power, and the idea of absolute necessity seemed to guide him just as chance decreed.

No sooner had he seized the reins of Government than he evinced implacable perfidy towards Count Louis de Frotte, Chief of the Norman

Royalists. He was still more cruel with respect to Toussaint Louverture, Commander in Chief of the Blacks of St. Domingo. The former paid with his head for the proclamations, which had developed the character of the Usurper; and the other perished, like Jugurtha, from misery and hunger in a fetid prison—an expiatory victim of the fatal expedition to Saint Domingo.

Soon after, another crime, which made more noise, was committed by him, and petrified the whole nation with horror. The only precious branch of the Condé family, the young Duke d'Enghien was seized in a free country, and in violation of the law of nations; and shot in the forest of Vincennes by torch light—an infamous murder, of which the very recollection lacerates every heart. The indignation was universal; but nothing could arrest the course of the ambitious Usurper. The body of a Prince, belonging to the house of Bourbon, sealed his compact with the regicides, and served him as a footstool to the throne.

Other atrocities marked his accession. Jealous of the reputation of Moreau and Pichegru, he formed a stratagem to be rid of them, and when, by means of a conspiracy, which his own agents had kindled, these two illustrious Commanders fell into his snare, he contrived to remove one by exile; and to dismiss the other by assassination, committed in the darkness of a dungeon.

Still he reigned, and ere long raised himself to the rank of Emperor. Under this ostentatious

title he was only the moving power, which guided a convulsive government, created for the gratification of an insolent and mean aristocracy. If he established his dynasty, it was only to undermine every other; for he believed that he never should reign securely in France, except by the destruction of Europe.

Hence he sewed the seeds of disunion in every cabinet, and introduced confusion into all political relations. An impenetrable veil covered all his plots, and those of his agents; but there is a celebrated island, where his conduct was watched, and where the liberty of the press denounced him to Europe, and particularly to infatuated France. He dreaded the patriotism of Britain, much more than her wealth and navy; he burnt with desire to invade that kingdom, in order to stifle for ever the voice of Truth.

This conquest, of which he was perpetually dreaming, promised him universal empire. The Continent of Europe was saved because an island, which belongs to it by habits though separated from it by the ocean, knew how to preserve inviolate its political vigour.

Instigated by malice, this Imperial trooper fell unawares upon the great powers of Europe, whom he found disunited and without any plan of resistance. He broke through all their barriers with torrents of intrepid soldiers—he triumphed over every obstacle—his sudden invasions were irresistible. Fraud and Falsehood marched before him.

If he held forth the olive-branch, each negociation concealed a snare, and each treaty was simply an armistice. Italy subjugated—Austria humbled—Prussia invaded and devastated—Germany enslaved—Russia repulsed—such were, in three campaigns, the great results, which subjected Europe to the preponderance of Napoleon Buonaparte!

Whether through blindness or ignorance, he believed in the submission of so many conquered nations,—an error of the first importance, and which was the source of all his political failures. One half of his enemies had served him for the purpose of weakening the other; but not daring to reckon on a single faithful ally among the sovereigns whom he had subdued, he formed a belt of kingdoms round his empire, which he distributed among the members of his family. From that time his politics were defective; for Europe refused to consider the man as destined to restore social order, who, by sanguinary wars and pacific overtures founded on deceit, called in question the rights of kings, and the independence of nations.

There was at that time only one system—one solitary code throughout those parts of the continent, which were subjected to the domination of Buonaparte. Such is the folly of conquerors, that they wish to impose their own laws and customs upon every nation.

In the intoxication of power, he never imagined that Nature herself could resist his will. The Pyrennees, the Ocean, the immensity of

Russia caused no sensation of doubt as to his progress. Wherever there were men, he conceived himself called upon to subdue them.

At this time began the impious war, which was undertaken to enslave the Spaniards,—a war reprobated by all France,—a war, which the cruel invader marked by sowing the seeds of division among the people of a faithful ally, by making a sudden irruption into his territory, by surprising his frontier towns, and seizing the princes of the royal house through the blackest perfidy.

But he degraded the grandees,—he wounded the pride of a generous nation, and learnt the secret of their energy. At that time the prophetic voice of a Spanish minister of state resounded through the cabinets of Europe. Don Pedro Cevallos, after having unmasked the odious conduct of Buonaparte, by which he had determined to usurp the crown of Spain, exclaimed, as if by inspiration: "Yes, I dare predict that this sacrilegious war, which Napoleon has waged, will recoil upon himself, and turn to his confusion. The cabinets of Europe will at length open their eyes to his destructive projects, and united nations will have only one object, commanded by the general welfare—his annihilation." A bold prophecy, but which was destined not to be fulfilled, till seven years of carnage and desolation had rolled away. It was, in fact, the Spanish war, which imparted to other nations, the art of defending themselves, which dissipated the illusion of Buo-

naparte's ascendancy, which dimmed the lustre of his arms, and which slowly dug the abyss destined to swallow up his power. Mortified by this resistance, he thirsted for revenge on England, the ally and support of the Spaniards, and the first that had braved his menaces. In his blind fury he persuaded himself that a simple decree would suffice to overcome an insular nation, which was absolute mistress of the ocean, and resolved on fighting to the very utmost in the cause of humanity. Not being able to oppose Britain by a powerful fleet, he wished all the ports of Europe to be shut against her, and proclaimed a *continental blockade.* This system was absurd; for, by a violation of all property, public or private, it would have totally destroyed the commerce of the universe, and precipitated mankind into indigence and barbarity.

At the same time, no longer preserving any respect for sovereignty, he violated all that is held sacred by men. He stripped of his states and detained as a captive the venerable head of the catholic faith; after having, in some degree, extorted his ministry at the ceremony of the coronation. The virtuous Pontiff, in chains, was no less than before the object of reverence, regret, and homage throughout Europe, and in due time he was destined to triumph, by the sanctity of his resignation, over the most formidable of tyrants.

The usurper of regal power struck Europe with terror, while his genius, at the same time,

exhausted itself in dishonouring France by acts of Asiatic despotism. At that time there were only two classes of people,—those who experienced all the weight of slavery, and those who had an interest in making them thus suffer. Order was established only by accusations and terror; the dungeons were choked up with prisoners of state; a sort of stupor took place of security, in private families, where even paternal authority was not respected. The youth, consigned to schools of military organization, were educated for no pursuit but that of arms. Every generous idea, every noble action was treated as if it arose from a wish to insult the majesty of the sovereign. Duty consisted in a person's devotion to his caprice; in extolling him; in exhausting the forms of flattery, which was now inseparable from every public action, and every production of the arts. Literature was become contemptible, for it was nothing more than an instrument of despotism, which it erected as its idol. The policy of government consisted entirely in error and imposition. Its head, wrapped in mystery, never communicated with the French but through the medium of emphatic speeches, and base adulation on the part of the ministers of the senate. Journals, books, conversation, all disguised the truth; and France, as if entirely enveloped in darkness, was not only ignorant of what was passing in Europe, but in her own bosom. Napoleon confounded an enlightened age with the remote times of barbarity,

towards which his institutions were rapidly conducting us. Of what did they consist? A conservative senate to decimate the population of France annually, and sanction all the extravagance of absolute power; with a legislative body, which was mute when any good was to be done, but not so in disposing of the subject's property, according to the will of the despot. Among these institutions too, a concordat was established, at which Buonaparte presided, as the august chief of the catholic religion; but it answered no purpose except the usurpation of the spiritual power.

All the departments were confounded in this motley government; and, next to the emperors of Morocco and Abyssynia, the most absolute sovereign in the universe was Napoleon. If he ever exhibited any signs of vigilance, it was in shewing his contempt for the decisions of the tribunals, by annulling them. If he ever moderated the zeal of his agents, it was because he wished to have the sole privilege of exercising oppression. Even in giving the French a civil code, he violated the rights of nations. He multiplied banishments and *lettres-de-cachet*, while the pages of his code were successively defended by ministerial decisions, by the decrees of the courts, and by the contradictory interpretations of commentators.

If he preserved the trial by jury, it was accompanied by commissions, military and civil, to counteract its effects; if he thundered forth againt ancient privileges, it was for the purpose of

creating new ones; if he established ancient titles as conferring a dignity upon the monarchy, it was to conceal by illusion the real nature of his government.

Let us pass on to his interior administration, and we shall see nothing but a tissue of contradictions and absurdities. The whole machinery was complicated and embarrassed. He himself had multiplied the officers and employments, in order thereby to purchase accomplices.

At first the finances of the state had been founded on the land tax; yet a system of rooting out the farmers from the soil seemed to be pursued, by loading them with heavy imposts. Napoleon also instituted chambers of commerce; but he, at the same time, drained all the sources of industry, and shut the seas of both hemispheres to the French. The exterior receipts supplied the finances — the war supported the armies — the licenses were the feeble vehicles of commerce.

It is true that he erected several ostentatious monuments in the capital of the empire—large palaces—porticoes—triumphal arches—and pillars consecrated by sanguinary trophies; but in the midst of so many proud edifices, we search in vain for one which inspires a pleasing recollection.

While Europe, desolated by the ambition of a single man, was nothing but a field of battle, the treasure and population of France were swallowed up in the abyss of war. Instead of *four* hundred millions, which France used to pay under her

kings, *fifteen* hundred scarcely sufficed for her constantly increased wants. The inhuman code of conscription annually decimated the flower of the male population, and according to the picturesque expression, used by a legislator of distinguished talents (M. Laisné) and an illustrious author (M. de Châteaubriand) eighty thousand young men were felled like the trees of a forest, every two months. When the war took an unfortunate turn, three levies of men were successively resorted to. The sons of the more wealthy were marched off in squadrons, under the title of *guards of honour*. Deprived of the right to procure substitutes, they went to be the first who perished in battle; thus answering for the fidelity of their families, whose hostages they were. It was said that the conqueror brought to our recollection the fable of the Minotaur—he was also compared to Saturn, who devoured his own children.

At that time, all the neighbouring states had recourse to these anti-social levies for their defence; for the destructive system could only be opposed by copying it. Fatal necessity! The nations of the earth seemed to be precipitated upon each other, for the purposes of mutual destruction. The order of the civilized world was overthrown, and the re-action of Europe, against the menacing empire of France, appeared to be inevitable. A portion of Germany was now to be united with this Colossus by decree, and as an integral part. The eye measured with alarm the limits of French power, which

stretched from the pillars of Hercules to the seas of the North; but what was thus gained in extent was lost in security. The downfal of this wide dominion was accelerated by the most extravagant expedition, which a passion for war and a thirst for conquest could possibly inspire. Before we take a slight survey of the famous invasion of Russia, let us examine the military genius of Buonaparte, and ascertain why the commander, who knew how to affect this invasion, was ignorant how to defend or preserve any thing, connected with it.

If the whole art of war consists in operating with large masses of soldiery—if an immense force can alone decide a battle, by attacking points, which are weak or ill defended—then Buonaparte had doubtless surpassed even the Attilas and Gengiskans in this murderous art. Italy alone was the real theatre of his glory. A sort of instinct has since urged him to overturn, invade and destroy. Tranquil amidst the tumult and carnage—master of himself, as well as of every thing around him, he had no delight except in the cruel game of war. War, however, is not merely composed of those parts of the art, which are called stratagem and tactics. Provident dispositions—sage deliberation—unexpected movements—scientific retreats—these form the talents, which characterize a leader of the first order. Every thing emanates from his genius. He hovers over empires—decides the destiny of nations—and like the Jupiter of Homer,

deals out victory to one—flight and death to the other. If he has united military combinations with political views, and yet shews himself incapable of prudence—if he sacrifices all to obtain ephemeral success, without caring about the chances of fortune—if, when galled by reverses, he condemns his troops to the hardest privations, and sacrifices them in marches beyond human strength—such a man has not attained the highest rank as a commander. His violent tactics would overturn the art of war, and force it to retrograde—his battle would be only butcheries of men, and his military renown would disappear, should Fortune declare against him. If, added to all this, he forces the nations of the North, South and West to encounter each other, and thus condemns himself, by dreadful ravages, to a wretched immortality—such a man, though capable of establishing empire, would prove unable to maintain it.

Such was Buonaparte in Spain, in Russia, in Germany, during that memorable campaign, when he was reduced to the necessity of defending his own capital, and knew not how to preserve it.

The phantom of glory allured him into the heart of the Russian empire; and he flattered himself that the humiliation of so great a power would revive, among the nations of Europe, the terror of his arms, which impression was beginning to wear away. Full of this chimerical idea, he collected the finest army that ever appeared upon earth.

Leaving Europe in mournful and anxious ex-

pectation, he passed the Niemen; overran Lithuania; disdained the more useful conquest of Volhinia and the Ukraine; neglected to organize Poland behind him, and proceeded towards Moscow by a single road, with all his army and its immense baggage. He was persuaded that, at this ancient city, he should dictate the terms of peace, and then return the master of the world; but inexorable Destiny had otherwise decreed. Napoleon found here a race of men, not far removed from a state of nature, and inaccessible to the two powerful auxiliaries, which had paved his way to the domination of Europe,—falsehood and terror. He could not have been conquered, however, but by a plan of campaign still more gigantic and dreadful than his own. Moscow was sacrificed—Russia and Europe thereby saved. The sublime constancy of the Emperor Alexander, the glorious exploits of his troops, and the immovable fidelity of his people, precipitated the aggressor from the height of power into misfortune and dejection. Buonaparte, as if inebriated, fell asleep among the smoking ruins of Moscow, and never dreamt about the rigour of the climate, or the near approach of winter. With a breath Providence dispersed his superb army. The frost, famine, distress, the bayonets of the Russians, and the lances of the Cossacks annihilated them. An enterprize, begun with a force so prodigious, failed; because its insensate commander wished to overleap the bounds established by nature, and acted in opposition to

all the precepts of wisdom. From this moment the military genius of Napoleon seemed to be paralysed.

Having escaped, as if by a miracle, through thousands of Russian and Tartarian squadrons, over plains covered with snow, dead bodies and ruins, the despot found no safety but in his own capital, whither he repaired, not as a conqueror, but as a fugitive monarch. He created still greater astonishment by his insensibility, than by the immensity of his reverses. But his flatterers wished to cover his disgrace, by persuading the nation that the *elements* alone were to blame: as if a rigorous frost during the month of November, in fifty-five degrees of latitude, was an incredible phenomenon.

Four months had not elapsed, before the seat of war was removed from the Dnieper and Dwina to the Oder and Elbe.

A grand revolution, in the political feeling of the European Cabinets, was sure to be the consequence of so decisive and brilliant a change. Buonaparte had no faithful allies; all wished to shake off the yoke of vassalage, which the tyrant had decorated with the name of alliance. The treaty, which at that time united Russia, Great Britain, and Sweden, afforded to the neighbouring states a new point of protection and re-union. Prussia was the first to join the above Powers. Such was the origin of the general confederation, which so rapidly formed itself against the preponderance of

Buonaparte. In vain did the magnanimous monarchs generously offer peace, requiring only that he should renounce his pretensions to interfere with the independence of Europe. Neither public misfortunes, nor the annihilation of industry, nor the sight of uncultivated fields, nor the exhaustion of his resources, nor so many families plunged into distress—nothing could move him. He wished to fill the universe with the renown of his name, and this wish was not checked by the dreadful spectacle of the vast continent of Europe, covered with the mingled bones of warriors, belonging to different nations, who never bore ill will towards each other, and whose respective distances ought to have preserved them from mutual destruction. The lessons, taught by misfortune and by history, were of no avail in competition with his lofty views. He knew not how to deduce, from so many disasters, motives for peace and the public good. He beheld unmoved the ravages which he had caused; and as if Heaven, in its anger, had placed a thick bandage over his eyes, he persuaded himself that France was inexhaustible, and that she would throw away upon him fresh troops, and more treasure, for the purpose of reconquering Europe. In fact, the bodies of the state were as blind as Buonaparte, and demanded of the nation immense sacrifices. A prudent foresight should have led us to render France impregnable, by forming and exercising new levies behind the Rhine, but this advice appeared pusillanimous in the eyes of Buo-

naparte. He repassed the river, as if some evil genius had driven him into the heart of Germany. There he hazarded all his fortune in two great battles—there, on the plains of Lutzen and Bautzen he, with difficulty, wrested the victory from the combined Russian and Prussian army, which retired into Silesia, without any abatement of its confidence and determination. Still the power of Napoleon was unsupported by public opinion. His army had gained nothing but an extent of land, while the Russian and Prussian troops fought to rescue the people, and the people were there to support them. But dazzled by the false splendour of two trophies, more brilliant than substantial, Buonaparte still believed himself *the God of War*, though it was manifest that he had roused Austria; while the Saxons and Bavarians, stimulated by the courage of despair, had actually joined the European confederacy. Without regard to ties, which had been formed by constraint, Austria finally put her troops in motion; and they took their station in front, of that which now became the grand army of the allies. It is true that these troops were repulsed under the walls of Dresden, but a French army, which acted on the offensive in Bohemia, was destroyed at the battle of Culm—a battle gained by the King of Prussia in person, and decisive as to the issue of the campaign. Another army also wished to act on the offensive in Silesia, but was driven back by Blucher. Two corps, still more formidable, successively advanced on Berlin,

but were defeated by the army of the north of Germany at Gros-Beeren and Dennewitz. Buonaparte, nevertheless, obstinately kept his station on the line of the Elbe; and though surrounded by three armies, still defied all Germany, which had risen in opposition to his tyranny. At length he quitted Dresden and retreated; but being attacked by all the united forces, he lost on three memorable days (the 16th, 18th, and 19th of October), in spite of the heroism of the French troops, more than two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, nine hundred waggons, several eagles and colours, nearly sixty thousand men, and his military renown. The German and Polish troops forsook him in crowds, and every thing announced to unfettered Europe that the liberty of Germany had been regained at Leipzig. This famous battle was the last effort of the universal tyrant.

Can it be conceived that, after having acquired such high reputation in thirty successful battles, Buonaparte could, on a decisive day, chuse a position so unfavourable for posting his army? The Elster and the Pleisse being behind him, and having to pass through a swamp, no means remained to effect his retreat but a narrow bridge, over which a hundred thousand men and three thousand carriages must defile. This bridge, so fatal to the French arms, he caused to be destroyed, that he might ensure his own escape, thus sacrificing all the corps which still remained between the Elster and Leipzig.

At this time the allied troops came up in

pursuit, and Napoleon escaped with hardly seventy thousand men—the wreck of so many fine armies. These retreating columns precipitately directed their course to Erfurt, followed, and hard pressed by the army of Silesia; while the grand army of Bohemia, commanded by the Prince of Schwartzenberg, hung on their left flank, and their right was continually annoyed by the army of the north of Germany. A flying corps, led by the intrepid Czernicheff, outstripped the advanced guard of the French, destroyed the magazines on its route, and rendered the roads impassable. Czernicheff then attacked the advanced guard itself.

Thus harassed, Buonaparte continued his retreat towards the Rhine, constantly pursued by the mass of the allied army. He had no more than fifty to sixty thousand men under his command—the rest were wandering in the mountains, without arms and ammunition. The roads were covered with the dead and dying—an undeniable evidence of a great defeat, which sufficiently pointed out to the allies the direction they were to take. But before Napoleon could reach the Rhine he had to encounter an Austrian-Bavarian army, which was resolved to prevent the passage of the vanquished. Hanau became to the French a new Berezina. It was only the heroic valour and intelligence of his generals, which could have enabled Buonaparte to continue his flight as far as Mayence, where he recrossed the Rhine.—There vanished the dream of universal empire.

The same disasters as those of the previous campaign were repeated in this, only with a greater share of disgrace, the sword alone having decided the dispute, without the influence of frost. On this occasion too the loss was irreparable.

After having escaped from so many perils, the vanquished Napoleon sought a tranquil refuge in his palace of the Tuileries. There, in the midst of his capital, surrounded by courtiers, he heard, with Asiatic indifference, that Europe was victorious, and that France in tears implored him to make peace, as being the only means to preserve his throne : in vain they argued—he rejected the advice with disdain, and exposed the empire itself to invasion, dismemberment, conquest, and all the horrors of war.

These calamities now approached us. It was at our own fire-sides that we were destined to behold the enemy. Paris itself, which, during the first ages of the monarchy, was in vain besieged by the Normans, could not now boast a similar escape.

If it be the greatest of political crimes to give up a country to invasion, Buonaparte by this measure completed his attempts to spread desolation ; and it is the last period of the power that was dropping from his hands, of which I am about to give a faithful description.

CHAPTER II.

March of the Allied Armies on Frankfort, and towards Holland—A Wish for Peace is manifested throughout Europe—Interview between Baron de Saint-Aignan with the Ministers of the Allied Powers—Confidential Communications to form the Basis of a General Peace—Extraordinary Sitting of the Council of State, at which Napoleon presided on the 11th of November—Decrees for doubling the Contributions, and levying three hundred thousand men—The Allies publish the celebrated Declaration of the 1st of December at Frankfort—Holland rises—Evacuation of Breda and Williamstadt—Grand Council of War held at Frankfort—The Invasion of France decided upon—Political State of France—Opening of the Session of the Legislative Corps—Formation of an extraordinary Commission—Entry of the Allies into Switzerland—Passage of the Rhine—The Allies penetrate into the French Territory—First Hostilities—Investment of Befort and Huninguen—Entry of the Austrians into Geneva—Report of the Extraordinary Commission on the Overtures of Peace—Adjournment of the Legislative Corps—Speech of Napoleon to the Deputies—Extraordinary Commissaries sent into the Provinces—Napoleon calls on the French to defend their Country.

From the borders of the Mayne to the shores of the Baltic, the whole north of Germany was overrun by the victors of Leipzig, consisting of Russians, Prussians, Austrians, Bavarians, and Swedes. The French corps, which still defended the places on the Vistula and Oder, as well as those which covered Dresden, Magdeburg, and Hamburg, being now left to themselves, were unable to form a junction, or effect a retreat. At the end of October, Hanover and Hesse were reconquered. The Russian General Winzingerode at that time pushed his detachments on the roads to Wesel and Dusseldorf. He was one day's march from Bremen,

and stretched his forces over the duchy of Oldenburg, towards the frontiers of Holland, whither he sent Colonel Narischken. The Prussian general Bulow, whose corps formed part of the army of the north of Germany, arrived at Minden; his infantry took the direction of Munster, while his cavalry joined that of General Czernicheff on the Rhine. The Russian general Woronzoff marched on Luneburg; and a division of the Swedish army occupied Brunswick. On the 6th of November the Crown Prince of Sweden removed his head-quarters to Hanover, and the Regency of the Electorate was immediately re-established. Finally, the grand allied army, which had taken a direction from Saxony towards Franconia, occupied the environs of Frankfort, where the monarchs of the coalition fixed their head-quarters on the 5th of November. In every quarter, the French legions, which had conquered two-thirds of Europe, now sought refuge beyond the Rhine.

The Russians would not have been where they at present were, if Napoleon had not provoked them, even to the catastrophe at Moscow. The Prussian army would not have been visible, if Napoleon had not, in violation of good faith, kept possession of Frederick's fortresses. The Austrian troops appeared, in like manner, to recover the supremacy of Germany, and avenge the outrages offered to their country. Lastly, the Swedes came, because in the midst of peace and in defiance of

a most solemn treaty, Napoleon surprised them at Stralsund, and insulted them at Stockholm.

All the Princes of Germany, formerly his allies, or rather his vassals, were eager to break the bonds of servitude. Even those, who were indebted to his power for the aggrandisement of their states, renounced his protection, and hastened to Frankfort, where they offered their co-operation and troops to the Allied Sovereigns. The arrival of the Russian and Prussian resources soon raised the army to a hundred thousand men; while the army of the North of Germany, consisting of eighty thousand, marched towards Belgium and Holland; and the army of Silesia, fifty thousand strong, was between the Maine and Necker, in order to hold communication with the grand army.

Thus a single day sufficed to commence the demolition of a political edifice, erected on a hundred victories, but without the concurrence of the people—a monstrous edifice, known by the name of the French Empire; formed on the ruins of states before independent and happy; aggrandized by provinces, wrested from ancient monarchies; and maintained at the expense of the blood and treasure of a whole generation.—It was the disunion of Sovereigns that delivered the European Continent into the power of Napoleon; and it was the union of sovereigns and nations, which redeemed their independence. A sentiment of national honor saved Russia, Spain and Germany.—

By an admirable feeling on all sides, the jealousy of cabinets was converted into a love of the public welfare; but it was become impossible to re-erect the social edifice, except by compelling Napoleon, in his turn, to bend beneath the sway of necessity. Peace alone, therefore, could save France from invasion; but France was ignorant that three hundred thousand troops were advancing against her from Germany. Official falsehoods, the palliatives of imposition, rapidly circulated through the provinces, and truth could only find its way by oblique means. The entire mass of the nation was blind to its real danger; the Allies, on the contrary, far from being dazzled by the success, with which fortune had favoured their arms, were ardently desirous of peace. Every nation supplicated this blessing of Heaven—Napoleon alone opposed the happiness of the world.

Meanwhile, one of his ministers in Germany, Baron de Saint-Aignan, who had at first been treated by mistake as a prisoner of war at Weimar, announced himself; and was received, with the respect due to his character, by Prince Metternich, the Austrian minister. During their first conversation, the Prince, applauding the revolution which had taken place in Germany, insisted on the necessity of peace, and pointed out the calmness and moderation, which distinguished the counsels of the Allied Sovereigns. "No disunion can take place among them," added the Prince; "and they are as powerful as they are moderate.

No one objects to the dynasty of the Emperor Napoleon; and if he feels a real wish to make peace, he will avert many evils from mankind, and great danger from France. The balance of Europe is not only practicable, but necessary. —By indirect means we shall never effect our object. It is only by loyal and candid explanation that we can arrive at the happy result. The question should be approached frankly, and without circumlocution."

These overtures produced an interview, and confidential communications between Baron de Saint-Aignan, Prince Metternich, Count Nesselrode the Russian Minister, and Lord Aberdeen, Ambassador from Great-Britain at the court of Vienna. It was on this occasion laid down as a principle, that the European Powers, who were engaged by indissoluble ties, had resolved unalterably to make no peace except a general one; that, by keeping within her natural limits, the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrennees, France would preserve all the integrity of her territory; but that the principle of absolute independence, for Germany, Spain, Italy, and Holland, was a *sine quâ non*; and that if these stipulations were admitted as a basis, some convenient place on the left bank of the Rhine might be declared neutral; to which the plenipotentiaries of the different powers might immediately repair for the purpose of negociation, without the military operations being thereby impeded.

On the 15th of November, Baron de Saint-Aignan conveyed to Paris the confidential communications of the allied ministers; but these important overtures produced only a vague and insignificant answer from the minister of exterior relations, without any explicit admission of the general basis.

Every thing indicated to the Allies that Napoleon wished to make their fiank dispositions answer his own purpose; and that if he vaguely allowed their pacific intentions, it would only be to deduce from them appearances, which, in the eyes of France, might justify the new sacrifices continually demanded by him. In spite of national exhaustion, in spite of general depression, despair still induced him to pursue measures of the most alarming nature. His warlike perseverance forbad him to shrink, or repent, or hope. In fact, from the period of his reverses in Russia and Saxony, his brain seems to have been turned.

On the 11th of November, he held an extraordinary council of state. The members of the council were admitted into his presence; and in order to avoid the embarrassment of a first interview, he rudely assailed the governor of the bank, bitterly reproaching him for the measures which, at a critical moment, had saved the establishment, and confirmed public credit. He continued these accusations without allowing the governor an instant to reply in defence, and ran through the same

circles of ideas, repeatedly mixing them with the most cruel expressions of contempt.

When he at length ceased, the counsellors of state went into the council-chamber; and the sitting was opened by reading a financial decree, made without the sanction of the legislative body, who were, however, convoked for the 2d of December. The object of the decree was to augment the contribution by an additional fifty per cent. and it passed without opposition. Among other observations, Napoleon said: "The contribution has no bounds. In general it conveys the idea of a fifth, but it may be raised to a quarter or a third, according to circumstances. No—the contribution has no bounds; and if there be any laws, which assert the contrary, they are badly framed."

After this decree a *projet* of the Senatus Consultum was read, placing at the disposal of the minister of war three hundred thousand men, to be taken upon the plan of the ancient conscription, the execution of which had already drained the country. A mournful silence pervaded the assembly, and the flatterers, being asked for their assent, remained for the first time dumb. One member, nevertheless, uttered these words: "Sire, the safety of the empire!"—Another ventured to blame the expression of *invaded frontiers*," as alarming. "Why?" exclaimed Napoleon." It is better to tell the whole truth. Has not Wellington entered France in the South? Do not the Russians

threaten us in the North? Are we not menaced by the Austrians and Bavarians in the East?—Wellington in France! What a disgrace! And the country has not risen *en masse* to drive him back!

"All my allies have abandoned me. The Bavarians have betrayed me.—Did they not attempt to post themselves behind me, in order to cut off my retreat? No peace till I have burnt Munich!—A triumphirate is formed in the North—the same that shared the spoils of Poland. No peace 'till it is destroyed! I demand three hundred thousand men. I will form a camp of one hundred thousand at Bourdeaux, a similar one at Lyons, and a third at Metz. With the preceding levy, and those troops which I still have under me, I shall then have a million; but I wish to have full grown men, and not striplings who merely fill the hospitals, or die on the roads. I can rely on none but the inhabitants of ancient France."

"Sire," said the counsellor, "we ought to retain ancient France."

"Yes, and Holland!" replied Napoleon roughly.—"Must I abandon Holland?—Rather let it sink in the sea.—Counsellors, an effort is requisite at this crisis. Every one must march. You are fathers of families, and chiefs of the nation; it is your duty to make the effort.—Peacc, it seems, is talked of. I know not what the term means, when every corner ought to resound with the cry of war."

After these words, which were uttered in a decisive but broken voice, the *projet* of the Senatus Consultum for a levy of three hundred thousand men was adopted without opposition. Napoleon terminated the sitting, and his courtiers and counsellors retired, agitated by various sentiments.

The Allied Powers might judge, from this hostile decree, that the peace of Europe was still far from the tyrant's mind, and that his only object, in apparently negociating, was to dispose the opinion of the public in his favor. Penetrating, therefore, into his secret view, the confederated sovereigns determined to obtain the peace so much desired, by conquests in France itself.

Arrived at the Rhine, they thought it their duty to repeat, not only their objects and determinations, but also the principles, which cemented their alliance. This they did by the following declaration, published at Frankfort on the 1st of December.

" The French government has decreed a new levy of three hundred thousand conscripts; and the motives for this Senatus Consultum comprehend a provocation to the Allies. They feel themselves called upon to promulgate again, in the face of the world, the principles, which form the basis of their conduct, their views, and their determination.

" The allied powers do not carry on war against France, but against the preponderance, loftily announced, which, to the misfortune of Europe, the Emperor Napoleon has too long exercised beyond the limits of his Empire.

"Victory has led the Allied Army to the Rhine. The first use, which their Majesties have made of it, has been to offer peace to his Majesty the Emperor of the French. Though their attitude is strengthened by the accession of all the German Sovereigns and Princes, this has no influence on the conditions of peace; which are founded on the independence of the French Empire, as well as on that of the other European States. The views of the Allied Powers are just in their object, generous and liberal in their application, establishing the security of all, and honorable to each party concerned.

"The Allied Sovereigns wish that France should be great, powerful, and happy; because the greatness and power of France form one of the fundamental bases of the social edifice. They wish that France may be happy, that her commerce may revive, and that the arts, which form the benefits of peace, may again flourish, because a nation cannot be tranquil till it is happy. The Allied Powers confirm to the French Empire a greater extent of territory, than was ever possessed under its kings, for a valiant nation is not degraded, because it has, in its turn, experienced reverses during an obstinate and sanguinary struggle, in which it has fought with its accustomed intrepidity.

"But the Allied Powers themselves wish also to be happy and tranquil. They aim at a state of peace, which, by a wise partition of strength and just equilibrium, may henceforth preserve their

subjects from the innumerable calamities, experienced by Europe during twenty years; and they cannot lay down their arms without having obtained this great and beneficial result—the noble object of their efforts. They will not lay down their arms till the political state of Europe has been confirmed anew, till immutable principles shall have taken the place of vain pretensions, and till the sanctity of treaties has at length insured real peace."

The world had not been accustomed to this tone of dignity, frankness, and moderation, on the part of potentates, holding snch extensive power. The moral object of the war was entirely on their side, and it became a heavy burden to Buonaparte. The declaration of Frankfort separated him from the French nation. He felt it; and eagarly made known, through M. de Caulaincourt, his new Minister of exterior relations, that he consented to the opening of a Congress, as well as the general basis, communicated in Germany to Baron de Saint-Aignan.

But the progress of negociation was become subordinate to military operations, and political incidents.

The mere approach of the first columns, belonging to the army of the North of Germany, towards the frontiers of Holland, caused a sudden revolution to burst forth in that country.

France had swallowed up Holland, like many other States, both monarchical and republican.

The despotism of Napoleon had hastened to consummate its invasion, which was deceitfully begun in the name of Liberty. Formerly rich and powerful, Holland was respected in the four quarters of the world; but at the time now spoken of, she was lost in the immensity of the French Empire. Even her very name had been blotted from the map.

The defection of eight foreign battalions, and four, composed of Dutchmen, forming the larger part of the French division under General Molitor, left Holland mistress of herself. The display of the colours so dear to the Dutch, and the cry of *Orange Boven* were the signal of emancipation. The French authorities and agents precipitately fled from a country, the impolitic union of which with France had reduced it to a state of the most deplorable distress.

This revolution, though so sudden, was not disgraced by any excess, or violence, either towards the Arch-Treasurer Le Brun, who filled the situation of Governor, or the troops which had so long oppressed the nation. Thus did the Dutch shew, to France and Europe, the distinction they made between the instrument, and instigator of their misfortunes. Honored be the wisdom of the Batavians, whose generous example of moderation and prudence, perhaps saved France, the Allies, and Europe, many years of war, guilt, and repentance!

By the emancipation of Holland, Belgium

was menaced; a Russian corps advancing in one quarter under General Winzingerode, as well as English and Dutch troops from other points.

Napoleon immediately caused all the disposable forces in the north to join Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum, who was charged with the defence of the Rhine from Cologne to Nimeguen. Several battalions of the Imperial Guard marched on to Antwerp; as well as other corps, which were to cover that important place. They formed an army of twenty to twenty-five thousand men, and were under the command of General Decaen.

Besides the formation of two armies to protect Belgium, the defence of the fortified places was equally attended to. General Molitor threw a garrison into Noorden, and General Rampon shut himself in Gorcum with four thousand men. Troops were also sent to Bois-le-Duc; and Bergen-op-Zoom was garrisoned with five thousand.

These Military dispositions were inefficacious against movements so rapid, that they disconcerted every combination. The Belgic smugglers, and the Dutch insurgents soon united themselves to the light troops of Winzingerode, who, after having surmounted the difficulty of crossing Moesdyk, appeared in force between Gertrudenberg and Breda. All Belgium was now in a state of ferment, and General Decaen, fearing a general insurrection, ordered the evacuation of Wilhelmstadt and Breda, in order to strengthen the defence of Ant-

werp. The first of these places was so suddenly abandoned, that powder, artillery, and part of the flotilla were left. The Allies, united with the insurgents, took possession of the two places, and Wilhelmstadt being a good point of debarkation, General Graham landed there with five thousand English troops.

In vain did Napoleon endeavour to conceal his mortification, regret, and alarm at the Dutch insurrection. "Holland," said he "has yielded to the Allies without defending itself. The people having declared in their favor, they have gained possession of some places, which nothing but a want of foresight could have abandoned to them." He considered the Commander in Chief of the army at Antwerp as answerable for these events, and recalled him; confiding the command to the Duke de Plaisance, and ordering a Court of Enquiry as to the abandonment of Wilhelmstadt and Breda. General Roguet was ordered to retake Breda, before the Allies had been able to establish themselves thoroughly. This the General carried into effect with five to six thousand men. He threw the advanced guard of the enemy into confusion, surrounded Breda, and bombarded it; but being attacked by an English corps, which had landed at Tholen, he was forced to take up a position at Hoogstraten, between Breda and Antwerp.

Thus the invasion appeared to begin in Belgium; but all these previous events were con-

cealed from France. The Dutch revolution, the loss of Breda, and the occupation of Wilhelmstadt by the English, were not officially announced till the thick veil, which covered all the offensive movements was finally rent. In lieu of authentic news, vague reports, often exaggerated and contradictory, were circulated in the capital, filling it with alarm and terror. The general opinion was that the Belgic provinces would be the first invaded, and that they would form the principal focus of the war.

This false conjecture misled Napoleon, who hastened to occupy the strong places on the Meuse, the Waal, the Moselle and the Scheld. The main part of his disposable force was sent to Cologne, Nimeguen, and Antwerp; by which he left the eastern frontier almost undefended.

The three Allied Sovereigns, and their principal generals, viz. the Prince of Shwartzenberg, the Russian General Barclay de Tolly, General Toll, the most renowned tactician of the Russian armies, General Pozzo di Borgo, particularly attached to the Cabinet of the Emperor Alexander, Field Marshal Blucher, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, and General Count de Wrede, opened a grand council of war at Frankfort, to arrange the mode of invasion, and determine on the points, at which the passages of the Rhine should be effected.

"Napoleon," said the most clear-sighted generals, "wishes to occupy and defend every place; and, in order to keep France under his yoke,

will repeat the faults which caused his loss of Germany. Do you not perceive that he is already distributing his forces among the towns of Holland, Belgium and the Rhine? But are not fortresses always the reward of victory? Besides, what are they without armies to support and cover them? Napoleon wants to preserve at the same time Italy, the frontiers of Spain, and all Belgium, without any where having an imposing army to effect his purpose. A rapid invasion will surprise him in the bosom of security. Above all, let us not allow him time to raise and arm the nation. Let us avail ourselves of the discontent, which is at its height, to separate him from the French. Can they now be mistaken as to the real author of all their calamities; the only object that deserves their hatred; the man, who has accumulated on their heads the vengeance of united nations."

Thus, without regard to the ordinary rules of war, it was decided to penetrate into France, leaving, behind the invading columns, all the vast circle of fortified places, and by a bold manœuvre, march quietly to Paris. This gigantic plan, proposed and supported by the Emperor of Russia, was adopted without contradiction. Another important question now presented itself—which should be the real point of attack? The Austrian cabinet, whose principal object was the conquest of Italy, wished the invasion to take place by Switzerland, and the eastern frontier. In this

case, the conquest of Lyons was to precede the movement on Paris, and the grand army of the Allies was to divide France into two parts, combining the operations of the east with those of Lord Wellington, by Guienne and Languedoc; but the Russian cabinet insisted upon marching straight to Paris, there to decide irrevocably the destinies of France and Europe. After a luminous and profound discussion, this plan prevailed, with such modifications, as conciliated those who were of a different opinion. It was resolved that the principal invading army should proceed from Switzerland between the 15th and 20th December; that the Russian corps of General Wittgenstein, and the Russian imperial guard should then pass the Rhine between Fort Louis and Fort Vauban; the army of Silesia between Mayence and Manheim; the army of the north of Germany between Coblentz and Nimeguen, successively, and in *échelon;* thus drawing the principal force of the French to the east, so that the other points might be the less disputed, and that the Allies, by combined and parallel marches, might all re-unite on the plains of Champagne.

A partial diversion near Neuss, between Cologne and Coblentz, disguised their real intention. Neuss, on the left bank, was surprised and occupied by nine hundred infantry and sixty Prussian hussars. The alarm immediately spread through the French cantonments, and the people seemed, by their demonstrations of joy, to invite the Allies,

whom they proclaimed as liberators. The reports, that the barrier of the Rhine had been forced, re-sounded in Paris, and at the court of Napoleon; and the simple circumstance, above recorded, was, by the fertile imagination of the Parisians, exaggerated into a passage of sixty thousand men. Napoleon himself caused the danger to be magnified, affecting to consider as national a war, grounded only upon his ambition.

The journalists received commands from the Minister of Police to awake the national honor. It was for them, said M. Savary, Duke of Rovigo, to rouse the French from their torpor. In a sort of animated harangue, he recommended that they should not conceal the public danger, but call upon every one to take up arms in defence of the country, which was menaced both in the north and south. He at the same time declared to them, doubtless in order to excite their ardour in the support of a government, which so liberally paid for their services, that if the French did not rise *en masse*, those Arabs of the north, the cossacks, would come and dictate laws to them, in the course of February.

From that time the journals broke through the melancholy silence, which they had so long preserved with regard to the political state of Europe. They represented the Emperor Napoleon as struggling alone against all the other monarchs, each power actuated by its particular views of aggrandisement; Germany bowing beneath the

sceptre of the Muscovite, and realizing the fable of the horse, which, after having called man to its aid, for the purpose of delivering it from its enemy, was soon subjected to its liberator. Thus every resource was brought into action, for the purpose of misleading and deceiving the public.

Alarming measures now announced Napoleon's distress. He ordered an immediate organization of the national guard. While the want of peace was felt by every one, and every mind was depressed, the tyrant, ashamed of the past and trembling for the present, looked forward with restless anxiety as to the future fate of his dynasty. He was seen to take his son in his arms, while he exclaimed, "My boy, I will yet secure for thee by arms all that I heretofore acquired." Precipitated from the height of his glory into a labyrinth of embarrassment and dangers, Napoleon was like Satan in the bottomless gulph, when he still brooded over the possibility of scaling Heaven. Inclosed in a palace, like that of an Asiatic monarch, he appeared to find no consolation but in the exterior ceremonies of the throne, constantly employing himself in playing the king, as if he foreboded that he was not long to act the difficult character. When he presided at the council board, he assumed a dark and ferocious mien, especially when the question turned upon religion, the conscription, taxes, or the measures of the police. His hoarse rough voice alarmed his flatterers and counsellors. His expressions, short,

imperious, and incoherent, betrayed the agitation of his soul, and the unsettled state of his intellects. Upon such a man reposed the destinies of France.

Under these sad auspices opened the session of the legislative body,—a body, which might in some degree be reckoned formidable, though in fetters. Napoleon, having an object in view, obtained, almost by force, a senatus consultum, appointing a president over the legislative body, who was not a member of it; and this president he chose from his own ministers, fixing upon M. Regnier, Duke of Massa. The discontent, excited by such an act of defiance and despotism, confirmed the uneasiness which Napoleon had previously felt as to the disposition of the deputies.

However, on the 19th of December, he convened with this body, the senate, the council of state, and the grand dignitaries, in order that the day of opening the discussions might be distinguished by pomp and splendour.

"Every thing is against us," said Napoleon, from his throne, "and France itself would be in danger, were it not for the energy and union of the French. I have never been seduced by prosperity —adversity will find me superior to its attacks."

These remarkable words formed the whole of this solemn speech. He afterwards announced that he adhered to the preliminary basis laid down by the coalesced powers; and that the original documents, which were in the port-folio of the

secretary for foreign affairs, should be communicated by his order, to the representation of the nation.

This speech was made with faltering articulation. The wavering motion of his person, the paleness of his features, the quickness of his step, as he entered and left the saloon of the Legislative Body, with the multiplied precautions for his safety—all indicated his alarm. He seemed to dread the body of representatives, though they were still dumb, in conformity to the essence of the Imperial Constitution; but the attitude which the members assumed, and their total absence of applause sufficiently showed that they considered the responsibility of the evils, with which France was burdened, to rest upon the oppressor of nations.

An extraordinary commission of five members, was immediately formed from the Legislative Body by ballot. They were Messieurs Laisné, Raynouard, Gallois, Flaugergues, and Maine de Biran, all well known for their sagacity, their knowledge, their hatred of despotism, and their wish for an honorable peace. The public were now destined to see that one of the first bodies of the state was not insensible to the misfortunes of the country; and that it would utter the words of truth even at the foot of the throne.

Napoleon, being convinced that the majority of the deputies were resolved to preserve the independence of their opinions, became restless and uneasy, seeing nothing round him but conspiracies

to ruin his authority. The Minister of the Interior, M. de Montalivet, undertook, however, at a private audience, to secure the majority of the legislators. He called on them individually, and was prodigal as to exhortations, caresses, and seductive promises. Vain attempts! The majority resisted the minister's temptations.—These steps were, it is true, enveloped in mystery; but in spite of the general secrecy, every thing began to transpire. All Frenchmen had not lost the sense of dignity in this decline of civilization; the most enlightened flattered themselves that a legal counterpoise would at last be found to the invasions of despotism; and that Napoleon would be compelled, by the will of the nation, to sign the peace, which suffering humanity demanded.

But the Senate was far from partaking in this salutary measure. Remaining firm in their blind devotion, the members of this body continued their docile obedience to the will of absolute power. It must be owned, nevertheless, that their acts breathed a pacific spirit; but this was merely a deception, for the purpose of at least justifying the sacrifices, which they demanded on the part of the country.

Count de Fontanes, who was the organ of an extraordinary committee, formed in the Senate, to take cognizance of the documents, relating to the state of the negociation, said, in a studied speech, that no one ought to believe the durability of a coalition, formed of such discordant elements, and

of so many nations, who were by nature rivals of each other.

"During this great struggle," continued he, "several illustrious persons have sustained reverses. Let us, then, rally round the diadem of France, from which the splendour of fifty victories darts through one fleeting cloud, and let us appeal to the national honor."

At this moment, when a sort of security seemed to prevail, and support the spirits—at this moment, when it was most erroneously thought in the capital, that the coalition was incapable of undertaking any decisive step on the French side of the Rhine, the allied armies were advancing from all points; and the Grand Imperial Austrio-Russian Army, which had taken a direction from Frankfort towards the Brisgau, and the borders of Switzerland, waited for nothing but the signal to penetrate into France by Basle, and the Eastern frontier.

This formidable army comprised seven Austrian divisions, under the command of Count Coloredo Mansfield, Prince Maurice of Lichtenstein, Count Giulay, General Bianchi, Count Bubna, Count Louis of Lichtenstein, and the Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Hombourg. It consisted besides of the Russian guards and reserve, commanded by Count Barclay de Tolly; a Russian corps under Count Wittgenstein, a Bavarian corps commanded by Count de Wrede, and composed of divisions under Lieutenant Field-Marshal Tresnel, Lieutenant Field-Marshal Bach, and Major-General

Tillen. Finally, it contained the Wurtemberg corps under the Prince Royal of that kingdom. These corps of different nations formed together a hundred and fifty thonsand men, under the immediate orders of Field-Marshal Prince Charles of Schwartzenberg.

Scarcely was the existence of such an army suspected in France, and its march towards the frontiers of Helvetia was carefully concealed until the last moment. "But the neutrality of Switzerland," observed some, "has been acknowledged by the Allies, and the inhabitants will take up arms rather than allow their territory to be violated." Such was the security of Napoleon and his ministers, that the invasion of Switzerland did not even appear to them a probable event.

On the 21st of December, the columns of the grand allied army suddenly entered that country between Basle and Schaffhausen, by Laufemborg and Rheinfelden, without a single shot being fired by the troops, which formed the Swiss *cordon*, or a single obstacle being opposed to this decisive movement. A proclamation by the Prince of Schwartzenberg, dated at Larrach, announced to the Swiss that the allied troops entered their country, as friends and liberators. At the same time twenty to thirty thousand men, of the Austro-Bavarian corps, passed the Rhine over the bridge of Basle, and touched on the French territory.— The following is the Prince of Schwartzenberg's proclamation:

"Frenchmen, victory has led the allied armies to your frontiers, which they are about to pass.

"We do not wage war against France; but we repel far from us the yoke, which your government would impose upon our respective countries. They have the same right to independence and happiness that your's possesses.

"Magistrates, owners of property, farmers, remain at your stations. The maintenance of public order, respect for private property, and discipline the most rigid will mark the conduct of the Allies, while they pass through, and remain in your country. They are actuated by no spirit of vengeance.

"Other principles, and other views than those, which conducted your armies to us, preside at the councils of the allied monarchs. Their glory will consist in having terminated the misfortunes of Europe. The only conquest, which is the object of their ambition, is peace; but a peace, which insures to their countries, to France, and to Europe, real repose. We had hopes of attaining it before we trod upon French soil—we are come thither in search of it."

The intelligence of this advance into Switzerland, on the part of the Allies, petrified the court of Napoleon. His flatterers and courtiers, full of consternation, designated this conduct as an act of perfidy, a violation of the rights of nations, and the laws of war. Their organs, the journalists,

exclaimed in the public prints: "Excellent! These Allies, so modest in their proclamations, so generous in their promises, break without shame through the barriers, established by good faith. They tear in pieces the most sacred treaties, and insult a nation renowned for its ancient loyalty and virtues. At the very moment that they issue hypocritical declarations from every quarter, at the moment that they talk of moderation, and proclaim themselves the restorers of the rights of nations, they are plotting base intrigues in the dark, attempting to corrupt the commandants of towns, and endeavouring to win by gold the places, which they cannot obtain by the sword. Oh, times of defection and ingratitude! They had pledged themselves to respect the Swiss territory, and all at once they over-run the country, which the day before they had sworn not to violate."

What answer did the allied powers return to these bitter accusations? In their Declaration, published at Larrach, they described the march of their troops across one part of the Swiss territory as being a measure indispensible to the operations and objects of the war. They founded their motives and justification on the ground that the neutrality of Switzerland was not legitimate nor real, as there could exist no proper neutrality, when a state was not possessed of independence.

"Have not the rulers of France themselves," retorted the coalition, "overturned the venerable constitution of Switzerland? Have they not un-

dermined her liberty ? Have they not plunged her peaceable inhabitants into civil broils ? Have they not plundered her of the treasure, which the sage economy of years had amassed ? Have they not dismembered the Swiss territory on every side, and trampled under foot the most sacred rights ? The Act of Mediation, imposed on Switzerland in 1803, sealed her political nullity, and in some degree legitimatized the domination of France. Hence, amidst the ravages, which, during ten years, have prevailed through Europe, Switzerland has only been able to purchase the shadow of tranquillity by submitting to the will of Napoleon. A word from him was a law to her ; as she was become nothing but a passive instrument of French tyranny. If she has nominally formed a separate political state, still she has been in reality a mere province of France. A declaration of neutrality, therefore, emanating from such sources, loses all the rights to which it pretends. At the same time, the opposition of some cantons has, in fact, annulled the confederation established by Napoleon.

"The allied sovereigns, therefore, consider the advance of the troops into Switzerland not only as a measure inseparable from their general plan of operation, but also as preparatory to arrangements, in which the rights of this interesting country will be established for the future ; its complete independence, as the first condition of its happiness, being one of the political requisites in the European system.

This declaration soon rallied the Swiss, by inspiring a well-founded hope of seeing their ancient independence revive.

After having made arrangements for a secure retreat, in case of any reverse, the allies confidently began offensive operations.

The occupation of the castle of Landskron, situated on a mountain in the department of the Higher Rhine, and the capture of the castle of Blamont, in the department of Doube, were the first conquests of the European league.

The Austro-Bavarian corps, under General Count Wrede, after having left some troops to invest Huninguen, took the road to Befort; while Lieutenant-General Count de Creneville's division penetrated by the defiles of Porentruy. A party, commanded by Major Weber took Willers, and placed outposts on the Doube. The general of cavalry, Baron de Frimont, pushed his advanced posts as far as Cerney. An Austrian column entered Neufchatel amidst the acclamations of the people; and, lastly, the light troops, under Count de Bubna, took the direction of Geneva.

On the 24th of December the Bavarian general, Count de Recheberg, examined and surrounded Befort. On the same day the French garrison made a sortie, but was forced back into the place.

The principal part of Count de Creneville's division entered Porentruy. The rest having taken the road to Delle, a communication with the Bava-

rian corps was established, and the advanced posts were pushed beyond the Doube.

Ten to twelve thousand Bavarians, supported by Frimont's Austrian division, took the direction of Befort, Delle and Montbeliard. From his head-quarters at Bolzheim, near Huninguen, Count de Wrede caused the latter place to be attacked, as well as Befort, but without besieging artillery.

Baron de Frimont pushed his division from Ensisheim to Sainte-Croix, near Colmar, where General Montelegier had arrived with a detachment of the fifth corps of French cavalry. These troops, accompanied by some infantry, rested on Sainte-Croix and Neubrisac. Colonel Baron Mangen led the advanced guard of the allies, divided into three corps. He had orders to attack with vigour all the advanced guards of the French, which were on the roads; to enter Sainte-Croix with the fugitives; and to pursue them beyond the town, in order that the French cavalry might not be able to form again. The two other corps were to take stations on the right and left of Sainte-Croix. On the 23d of December the *vedettes* and *piquets* were surprised and killed, but the grand guard, which consisted of a whole squadron, and was supported by several detachments, made a resistance in front of the town, and afterwards in the town itself; repulsing the repeated charges of the Austrian and Bavarian hussars.

Some infantry, which had thrown themselves

into Sainte-Croix, assailed the allies with a brisk discharge of musketry. Captain Wolf, of Schwartzenberg's *hulans*, was killed, and a ball fractured the arm of Lieutenant Baron Malovitz. The Austrian cavalry being repulsed, and unable, from a dense fog, to reconnoitre the position of the French, retired: and Lieutenant-general Harding again took up the position, which he had occupied on the preceding day.

Thus the first combat upon French ground proved to the advantage of national bravery. The journals of Paris exaggerated the importance of this ephemeral success, which had no effect in stopping the progress of the enemy. The battle of Sainte-Croix was a mere *reconnoissance*, during which Colonel Scheibler, with a hundred and fifty cossacks and fifty hussars, advanced as far as Deshenheim, where he met and successively destroyed two French parties, having pursued them to the glacis of Neu-brisac.

Count de Lichtemberg, at the head of four hundred Austro-Bavarian cavalry, advanced on the road to Lure and Besançon. All the French authorities evacuated the towns and villages on the approach of the allies; and abandoned a country, which the inhabitants refused to defend, in spite of the efforts of the military commandants.

On the 27th of December, Count de Wrede detached the Bavarian lieutenant of light horse, Baron de Gagera, on the road to Befort and Vesoul. This officer met, near Lure, a piquet of twenty-six chasseurs and twenty French *gens d'armes*,

who, at his approach, sought a retreat behind the village, where the Baron attacked them and put them to flight.

The preludes to a campaign so honourable were also signalized by a more important event—the capture of Geneva. This ancient republic had been united to France for more than twenty years; and owed to its revolutionary alliance not only the loss of independence, but also that of its prosperity. The inhabitants of this place too were eager to shake off the yoke of Napoleon. On the 30th of December an Austrian advanced guard, commanded by General Count de Bubna, and consisting of three thousand men, furnished with ladders, fascines, and artillery, approached from Switzerland to make an assault on Geneva, which was defended by General Jordy with twelve hundred men. The place being dismantled, no regular and efficacious resistance could be made; besides which the citizens, who command the city by their influence, wished to preserve it from the horrors of an assault.

General Jordy, a brave old officer, as if thunderstruck at witnessing circumstances so unforeseen, fell senseless in the midst of his staff; and the officer who succeeded him in the command, being without instructions, did not even think of capitulating, but left the citizens to follow their own unanimous opinion. Accordingly the white flag was hoisted; the garrison and French authorities left the place; and the citizens opened the gates to the Austrians, at the very moment that the rein-

forcements arrived from Grenoble. They came too late. A hundred and seventeen cannon, and a city, important from its position, remained in the possession of the allies.

Thus become master of Geneva, Count Bubna immediately sent detachments on the roads to Gex and Saint Claude, in order to secure the passage of Jura. In like manner he stationed other parties from Martigny to Simplon and Mount Saint Bernard.

The capture of Geneva, which was one of the gates to Napoleon's empire, opened the road to Lyons, and the passages of Italy, to the Austrian army. That the city had yielded without defence exasperated Buonaparte, who disgraced Baron Capelle, the prefect, for having abandoned it, and for having forgotten that prefects are not merely intendents of finance, but also hold the police in their departments.

Thus the Rhine and the Rhone were emancipated, and the eastern frontier invaded at several points. Not a single regiment of regular or irregular troops appeared to defend it. Now, therefore, the grand question was to be decided, whether France still possessed moral and physical resources; or in other words, whether she could resist the formidable coalition, which attacked her on her own soil?

A sentiment of honour and glory always distinguished the French. They defended their territory during the martial reigns of Philip Augustus

and Charles the Seventh; under the benevolent Henry; and under the ostentatious Louis the Fourteenth; and in our own days, during the most tumultuous times, and amidst the greatest convulsions, have we not witnessed the effect produced by the sacred principle of national honour?

Admitting that the French were willing to defend their country, had they the means? Was not their male population exhausted? Had they sufficient arms and ammunition? A multitude of causes, natural and accidental, had so far tended to increase the population, that it was greater than in 1789, in spite of the losses and disasters of so many wars. It appeared, therefore, to be in a greater degree capable of defence, especially as a principal part of the French had been bred in camps. The arsenals of France were exhausted, but not destroyed. The revolution had shewn how arms and ammunition could be provided. Iron-mines still existed; the forests produced salt-petre, and were not yet reduced to ashes. If France, when formerly torn by factions, had been able to dissipate all the coalitions formed against her, would she not triumph over a confederacy, formed of such discordant and heterogeneous elements? Such were the arguments which the writers and partisans of Napoleon wanted to establish as conclusive; but those who were capable of interpreting the present and reading the future, found, by reverting to moral causes, the solution of this great question.

Have not men of the most profound genius, (for instance Machiavel and Montesquieu) established it as a principle that, of all governments, the one, which degenerates into despotism, is the least likely to oppose, by national opposition, the efforts of a combined irruption ? What, then, was become of that energy among us, which even the excess of liberty tended to nourish ? Had not the enormous weight of oppression stifled it ? Had not fear and egotism taken the place of every generous sentiment ? Was not the name of country a word devoid of sense ? Fatigued and discontented as the nation was, could it be expected to rise, for the interest of a single man ?

It is true that Napoleon, when in danger, might change his system, return within the natural limits of his power, invoke with sincerity the confidence and aid of the nation, and finally prove that he wished for peace on a basis, which would establish the equilibrium and tranquillity of Europe; but the events, which marked the close of December, plainly indicated that this inflexible character could not submit to necessity, even for his own preservation.

The invasion was proclaimed, and the Legislative body placed their entire confidence in the upright men, who composed the extraordinary committee. After a thousand impediments had been thrown in their way, the committee made their report on the 28th of December, through their organ M. Laisné. It was most luminous and mo-

derate throughout, and contained the following passages, which are worthy of figuring in the annals of the nation.

"If the declarations of the foreign powers were fallacious—if it were their object to enslave us—if they meditated the dismemberment of the sacred territory of France, it would be requisite to carry on a national war for the purpose of averting such calamities. But the more completely to effect this grand movement, by which an empire is to be preserved, is it not desirable to unite the nation and the monarch by closer ties?

"It is necessary that silence should be imposed on the enemy as to their accusations of aggrandizement, conquest and alarming preponderance; and since the allied powers have chosen to declare by public proclamations that such are our intentions, is it not worthy of his Majesty to shew the matter in a clear light, by solemnly declaring to Europe what are the designs of France, and her Emperor?

"When that Prince, to whose name history has added the epithet of great, wished to rouse the energy of his people, he revealed to them all that he had done to effect peace, and his noble confidence was not misplaced.

"In order, therefore, that the allied powers may no longer accuse France and the Emperor of wishing to preserve too extended a territory, the preponderance of which they seem to fear, will it not be an act of real greatness to confute and convince them by a formal declaration?

"It is not for us to suggest the words, which will resound throughout the world; but in order that this declaration may have a salutary influence on foreign powers, and make the desired impression upon France, is it not desirable that it should announce the promise of only continuing the war for the independence of the French nation, and the integrity of its territory? Will not such a declaration carry with it irresistible conviction throughout Europe?

"If after this, when the French Empire faithfully adheres to the liberal principles, which the heads of the European nations proclaim as all they wish, the obstinacy of the enemy should still force them to a just and necessary war for national independence, France will know how to call forth, in the maintenance of her rights, the energy, union and perseverance, of which she has heretofore displayed such brilliant examples. Unanimous in the wish to obtain peace, she will be equally so in her determination to enforce it by conquest, and she will prove to the world that a great nation can do all it will, when its object is no more than honor and its just rights demand.

"But it is not enough merely to rouse the people, and place them in a state of defence; it is for Government to propose such means, in conformity with the laws, as appear the most prompt and certain to repulse the enemy, and fix the peace on a durable basis. These means will be efficacious, if the French are persuaded that Govern-

ment only aspires to the glory of peace—they will be so if the French are convinced that their blood will only be shed to defend their country, and protecting laws. But the consolatory words, peace and country, will resound in vain, unless the institutions are supported, which promise the benefits of the one and the other.

"It appears, therefore, indispensible to your committee, that when Government shall propose the measures deemed most expedient for the safety of the State, his Majesty shall be, at the same time, solicited to maintain the entire and constant execution of the laws, which guarantee to the French the rights of liberty, security, property, and the free excercise of their political privileges.

"This guarantee appears to your committee the most efficacious means of imparting to the French the energy necessary for their own defence."

A motion was immediately made that this report should be printed, and an animated, or, more properly speaking, violent debate ensued on this proposition in a secret committee. The party of the court, however, could only muster a feeble force, and the resolution to print the report was carried by a large majority. The next day it was again decreed at a public sitting, in spite of the manœuvres of the President, and the court champions. Thus the extraordinary committee, and the Legislative body itself, appeared to have obtained a complete triumph, when all at once, on the 30th of December, the hall of the sittings was suddenly closed and guarded by soldiers.

This stretch of authority, in the very heart of the capital, may be said to have been the last effort of expiring tyranny.

The sage propositions, and decorous representations, which had been suggested to the extraordinary committee by the purest patriotism, were considered by Napoleon and his ministers as an attack upon Imperial authority; to such a low degree of contempt had the courtiers sunk.

Some of the servants of the Crown had, at a Privy Council, proposed the arrest of the members of the committee—others had called for prompt measures against the *factious*. Napoleon decreed the adjournment of the Legislative Body, and the suppression of the printed report as inflammatory.

Thus, dreading legal representations still more than the disasters of war, he outrageously drove the deputies from their post in the face of France, because they had for once dared to tell the truth with as much dignity as respect.

Nor did his vengeance rest here. On the 1st of January, he attacked the Representatives of the nation from the throne in a speech full of asperity, reproaches, and menaces—a speech, which was unconnected, incoherent, and in short an irrefragable proof of disordered intellects.

After having declared to the assembled deputies that he had caused the report of the committee to be suppressed, he stated that a twelfth part of the Legislative Body consisted of bad, factious, citizens; that the members of the committee be-

longed to the number; that their organ M. Laisné, was a traitor; and that their object evidently was to blacken him in the eyes of the nation. He then added with vehemence: "You are not the representatives of the nation, but of the departments. I was fixed upon to mount this throne by millions of Frenchmen—and what is this throne? Wood, covered with velvet. *The throne is myself*; I am the sole representative of the people. If I listened to you, I should cede more to the enemy than he demands of me. You shall have peace in three months, or *I will perish.* I am at the head of the nation, because the constitution of the state ordains it. If France wanted another constitution, I would tell her to look for another monarch. Yes, I am lofty, because I am courageous—I am lofty, because I have achieved great exploits—Return to your occupations, and if there be found one among you, who causes the report to be printed, I will insert the document in the Moniteur, with notes digested by myself. Supposing that I have done wrong, it is not for you to reproach me publicly. France needs me more than I need France."

It may easily be supposed that from this time the empire was lost in the hands of such a man. Entirely separated from the nation, and deprived of any real assistance, Napoleon was now reduced to the usual resources of despotic government. His will was uncertain, though violent; and after having formed one furious resolution after another, he determined on applying desperate remedies, as

the only cure for the evils he had produced. He immediately dispatched extraordinary commissaries to the military divisions of the Empire, for the purpose of presiding over the levies *en masse*, and other measures of interior defence.—Their number was twenty-seven, and they were selected from his Senate and Council of State.—Did he wish to renew those sanguinary proconsulates, which desolated the provinces, during the horrors of the revolution? It was to be suspected and feared that he did; for these new commissaries were authorised to execute every measure of police, to make the degrees obligatory on every citizen, to arrest any one whom they suspected of favouring the enemy, and bring him before a military commission of their own creation —in one word, they had the power of life and death, like the conventional proconsuls. But the arm of terror, so powerful under democratic anarchy, was feeble, when raised by flexible courtiers—men, devoid of energy, bending under the weight of ill acquired wealth, and alarmed at the responsibility of their appointments.

In general, therefore, they confined themselves to pompous speeches, or issued proclamations and addresses, which breathed the spirit of flattery and servile devotion to their master, whose mere instruments they were, although vested with sovereign authority; as if the despot had tried to multiply himself. At the moment that the commissaries departed, the prefects received positive orders

to organize the levies *en masse*, destined to repulse the enemy, and terminate the invasion.

Napoleon himself now raised the curtain, which had concealed from the French the dangers of the country, and in a public speech used these alarming words: "Bearn, Alsace, Franche-Comté, and Brabant are invaded. Let us obtain peace by a final effort. I call on the French to succour the French; I call on the French of Paris, of Brittany, Normandy, Champagne, Burgundy, and the other departments, to assist their brethren. At the sight of all this nation in arms, the enemy will fly, or make peace."

The policy of Napoleon and his ministers was now entirely employed in throwing on the Allies the charge of evils inseparable from a war of invasion. Moreover, the confederated powers had scarcely passed the Rhine, when M. de Caulaincourt, Minister of the exterior relations of France, was dispatched to them, and presented himself at the advanced posts, furnished with full powers to negociate.

But the progress of events had inspired them with a feeling of the entire force, which the European league had acquired. The principles which had directed their counsels, since their first union for the general good, began fully to develope themselves, and henceforth nothing was necessary but to state in direct terms what conditions they required. In hopes that the experience of adversity (a councellor, who tells the truth even to kings)

would have influence over a man, exposed to the reproaches of a great nation, and a witness, for the first time, of the evils, which he had drawn upon his own subjects, the Allied Powers decided upon opening pacific negociations. Convinced, however, that the attempt, which they were about to make, ought not to compromise the progress of military operations, they agreed that these should neither be suspended nor interrupted during the negociations. Mournful recollections, connected with the history of the past, induced them to fix this unalterably. Between the 15th and 20th of January, their Plenipotentiaries and that of France assembled at Chatillon-sur-Seine.

But the irruption was, in the mean time become so formidable on the eastern frontier, that Napoleon might justly be apprehensive of having scarcely time to collect the remnant of his army, for the purpose of covering his capital.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER III.

Passage of the Rhine by the Russian corps under General Wittgenstein—Passage of the Rhine by the Army of Silesia—Capture of Cobleutz—Investment of Mayence—Retreat of Marshals Victor and Marmont—Passage of the Rhine by the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg—Entry of General Count de Wrede into Colmar—Entry of the Allies into Vesoul—Description of the Chain of the Vosges—Combined march of the Allies—They force the defiles of the Vosges—Irruption of the Cossacks—Battles of Sainte Marguerite and Sainte Dié—Entry of the Allies into Epinal—Progress of the left wing of the Allies in the departments of the Jura, l'Ain, and Doubs—Investment of Besançon—Resistance of Bourg-en-Bresse, and pillage of that Town—The three Allied Sovereigns pass the Rhine at Basle—Proclamation of the Emperor Alexander, to his troops—Napoleon endeavours to obtain popularity—His rides in Paris—His efforts to make the War a national one—Address of the Senate—March of the Silesian Army on Metz, Thionville, Pont-a-Moussou, and Nancy—Projet to defend the Towns on the Line of Invasion—Langres is threatened—Arrival of the National Guard at this place—Its retreat on Chaumont—Capture of Langres by the Austrian General, Count Glulay,

All the Austrian and Bavarian troops, forming the first line of the Allied Army, had passed the Rhine between Basle and Schaffhausen. The Russians and their numerous Cossacks, the Prussians, the troops of Wurtemberg, and those of Baden were in motion on different points of the immense space, comprised between the Brisgau and the Wesel. The Prussian army, commanded by Field-Marshal Blucher, left its cantonments on the Mayne and Neckar, in order to effect the passage of the Rhine between Coblentz and Manheim, while the Russian corps, under General Wittgen-

stein, moved to effect the same object above Strasburg, in the neighbourhood of Rastadt. On the opposite bank, from Strasburg to Coblentz, the French line was only defended by troops who were disheartened by defeat, and enfeebled by sickness. Mayence and the neighbouring places were afflicted with a contagious disorder, which had spread its mortal ravages among the remains of the French army. The whole force, scattered along the left bank, Belgium excepted, hardly amounted to two corps of ten or twelve thousand men, under the command of Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno, and Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa. The one occupied the interior line, established between Colmar and Wissemburg by Schelestadt, Strasburg, and Haguenau; the other rested on Landau, Neustadt, Durkheim, Gruntadt, Mayence, and Coblentz.

How was such an extensive line to be defended, by so small a force, against an enemy superior in numbers, and of whose intentions no accurate conjecture could be formed? The entry of the Allies into Switzerland had produced so lively a sensation in all the provinces of the left bank, that the prefects, generals, and agents of government were incapable, from doubt and perplexity, of taking any decisive and uniform step. It was thought that the principal force of the coalition would successively take the route of Basle, Porentruy, and Montbeliard, which opened to them the East and South of France.

But the irruption of the new columns, upon nearly the whole line of the Rhine, at length displayed the vast plan of the Allies. During the night of the 1st of January the Russian corps, under General Wittgenstein, effected its passage successfully near Fort Louis. At the commencement of this operation, two hundred French, who were stationed in an island, opened a discharge of musketry, by which some of the Russians were killed, and several wounded; but the Dutch soldiers passed over to the Russians, and a French officer was taken. Not being able to prolong their resistance, the French abandoned the island, under shelter of the night, as well as forts Vauban and Alsace; retiring precipitately on the left bank.— Count Wittgenstein immediately dispatched two regiments of cossacks from the other side of the river, to spread themselves in every direction.— After having constructed a bridge, this general in person conducted all his cavalry over it, and was soon followed by all his infantry, forming fifteen to twenty thousand men. The whole country was instantly over run by Russians and cossacks.— The scattered French troops, thus surprised, tried to effect a retreat, and join the main part of their army. General Count Pahlen, at the head of the Russian advanced guard, occupied, without a blow, Lauterburg, Haguenau, and Vaugenau; then, pursuing his success, he marched on Saverne. The Marshal Duke of Belluno, compelled to fall back before this superior force, manœuvered to gain

possession of the defiles of the Vosges, between Saverne and the mountain of Ballon d'Alsace.—General Segur favoured this retrogade movement, by maintaining a combat with two regiments of cossacks, in the straights of Saverne.—Count Wittgenstein also pushed his detachments towards Strasburg and Schelestadt; that he might join the Austro-Bavarian divison of General Count de Wrede. Numerous squadrons of cavalry extended to Weissemburg, Landau, and Spires.

Another passage of the Rhine, still more formidable, was effected between the Mayne and Neckar, by the army of Silesia, formed by General York's corps, having under his command the divisions of Prince Charles of Mecklenburg, General Horn, and General Huenerbein; and Kleist's corps, composed of the divisions of General Klux, Prince Augustus Ferdinand of Prussia, and General Pirch. To these Prussian corps were united three Russian ones, under Generals Sacken, Saint-Priest, and Langeron.

It was on the 30th of December that Field-Marshal Blucher left his head-quarters at Frankfort, and proceeded to the right bank of the Rhine, where every thing was prepared for crossing the river. General Saint Priest, whose corps formed the right of the army, effected the first passage at Ehrenbreistein, and having caused a bridge to be thrown over at Neuwied, a party of his troops crossed the river under the command of General Bistram, with orders to attack the French entrenchments on

the other side of the Lahn. After a slight resistance they were carried, and General Bistram directly marched to Coblentz, of which place he made himself master, taking seven cannon and five hundred prisoners.

At the same time Count Langeron and General York passed all their divisions near Caub, in the presence of that illustrious veteran Field Marshal Blucher, on whose exploits Fame delights to dwell. The advanced guard surprised the posts on the left bank of the Rhine, and immediately seized upon Baccarach and Ober-Wesel. A bridge of boats, supported on Ofaltz (an old castle situated upon an island of the Rhine) was directly thrown to the ancient palatinate. On new year's day General Huenerbein entered Creutnach, and General York followed, with all his divisions.

On the first intelligence of this sudden irruption the French division, under General Ricard, which guarded the Rhine from Mayence to Coblentz, rallied at Simmern, hoping to maintain that position; but Colonel Henkell, marching directly to the place, broke down the gates, and took possession of it, with two hundred prisoners.

On the 30th of December, General Sacken had fixed his head-quarters at Manheim. His divisions, forming the left wing of the Silesian army, were collected under the eyes of the King of Prussia, who animated all by his presence, and imparted a decisive impulse to the passage. This prince is the first soldier of his army, and the

worthy object of enthusiastic respect on the part of his subjects, from his benevolence, dignified affability, and the lively interest which he takes in every thing that concerns their happiness. He now received the best proof of their genuine regard, in their efforts to fix him securely upon the throne of Frederick the Great.

A hundred craft on the Neckar, and a new bridge of boats were ready to effect the passage in the face of Manheim. Four to five hundred boatmen were at their stations. On the 1st of January, General Sass and Talzien threw themselves into the vessels, with two divisions of infantry: at break of day the flotilla weighed anchor and, favored by a fog, passed in front of the French redoubt, situated in front of the Neckar, and in the forest of Frisenheim. A profound silence prevailed throughout the flotilla, which reached the advanced posts of the French before it had been perceived. But the alarm soon spread through the line; and an obstinate engagement took place, the noise of which was heard as far as the canal of Frankenthal. The artillery opened their fire upon the vessels, but without causing any injury, or preventing the disembarkation in regular order. Four cannons and two howitzers defended the intrenchments and redoubts, surrounded by a deep ditch with draw-bridges, the front bristled with palisades, the flanks and rear covered with felled trees, and protected by the advanced guard.

The resistance of the French was worthy of their accustomed valour. Many Russians lost their lives at the foot of the intrenchments; but after three successive attacks, the Allies remained victorious. Six cannon, and nearly six hundred prisoners were the reward of their victory. Ten thousand Russians had passed the Rhine in less than an hour. The cossacks soon skirmished as far as Frankenthal, clearing the roads to Spires and Worms. General Sacken marched with his whole force in the same direction. He detached General Prince Biron de Courland to open, by Altzey, a communication with the two corps of Langeron and York. Thus in twenty-four hours, more than forty thousand men crossed the Rhine, and guarded themselves by *têtes-de-pont;* a passage which deserves, from the rapidity and resolution displayed in it, to be enrolled among the military annals of Europe.

The Marshal Duke of Ragusa had tranquilly remained in his cantonments, and had received no account of this passage on the part of the Allies, till it had actually taken place. He instantly assembled his troops, and arrived at Neustadt with his advanced guard, just as the cossacks made their appearance on the road to Manheim. The marshal dispatched several squadrons of light horse to drive them back, but nothing could oppose the invasion. In vain did the duke wish to keep a position on the heights, between Turckheim and Ellestadt. Such was the inferiority of his force,

that he was constrained to abandon it, leaving behind him a great number of sick and wounded.

General Langeron had taken the direction of Bingen, which he found occupied; but made himself master of it on the 3d of January, and then advanced towards Mayence. From that time the communication between Mayence and the French empire was interrupted. The Duke of Ragusa's corps being reduced to a number incapable of opposing any efficacious resistance, he took a position at the feet of the Vosges, towards the Sarre; after having lost, during his precipitate retreat, several cannon and fifteen hundred men. On the 4th of January, the army of Silesia was in possession of all the country, situated between Manheim and the Moselle. Napoleon and his generals so little expected this sudden passage of the Rhine, on the part of the Prussian army, that the authorities, on the left bank, had not time to put the levy *en masse* in execution, either in the towns or country. Wherever this step of despair was taken, the people refused; being doubtless unwilling to complete the sum of their calamities by a resistance which they deemed useless. The roads were covered with deserters, and refractory conscripts, to whom the allied generals gave assurances of a safe retreat in the districts which they covered.

Thus, Napoleon, not having been able to collect a sufficient force for the defence of the Rhine and Vosges, the Allies effected their irrup-

tion without any obstacle, always using great precautions to avoid surprise.

On the day that Field Marshal Blucher entered the French territory, he addressed the following proclamation to the inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine :—

"I have caused the army of Silesia to pass the Rhine, in order to re-establish the liberty and independence of nations, and by conquest to obtain peace. The Emperor Napoleon has united to the French Empire Holland, part of Germany, and Italy; he has declared that he will not yield a village of his conquests, even if the enemy should occupy the heights which overlook Paris.

"It is against this declaration and these principles that the armies of all the European Powers advance.

"If you wish to defend these principles, place yourselves in the ranks of the Emperor Napoleon, and try again to oppose the just cause, which Providence so evidently sanctions.

"If you will not, you shall find protectors in us. I confirm to you the safety of your property. Every inhabitant of town or country may remain quietly at home; every one may keep his station, and follow his pursuits.

"From the moment that the allied troops enter any district, all communication with the French Empire must cease. Every one who fails in conforming to this order will be guiltyof treason

towards the Allied Powers, will be tried by a Council of War, and punished with death."

No opposition, however, was made to the progress of the Silesian army, and the Russian corps of Wittgenstein. In spite of wretched roads and a most inclement season, Field-Marshal Blucher took Kreutznach on the 4th of January, and established his head-quarters there; while the advanced posts of General York advanced on the Lauter, and General Langeron blockaded Mayence.

Between Basle and Befort the Austro-Bavarian columns had not penetrated till they were secure of a communication with the Rhine The head-quarters of the universal Commander-in-Chief, Prince of Schwartzenberg, were at Altkirch. His Highness ordered General Bianchi to invest Befort, thereby relieving General Wrede, who immediately moved on Colmar. General Bianchi pushed his detachments to the very gates of Vesoul, and Count de Wrede entered Colmar on the 4th of January. At the approach of the Bavarian corps under his command, the prefect of the Higher-Rhine had abandoned his post. The general confided the administration of the department to a commission, composed of M. Kneps and Baron de Stengel, providing, by two proclamations, against any interruption to the course of justice.

The Wurtemberg corps having passed the Rhine at Mærks, below Huningen, the Prince Royal

of Wurtemberg directed his march to form a junction, and act in concert with General Wrede.

Huninguen, Befort, Schelestadt, and the Citadel of Colmar, were blockaded. Neuf-Brisac and Fort Mortier were invested by a Wurtemberg detachment. The French garrison vainly attempted a sortie, they were repulsed by Major Rheinhart. The garrison of Befort was also repulsed on the 5th of January. The march of the columns towards the Vosges was, in no degree, interrupted by these blockades.

On the 4th, Lieutenant-Colonel Latour entered Vesoul, the principal place of the department of the Higher Saône. The prefect and authorities hastily quitted the place, abandoning the magazines of forage, and a hundred sick soldiers. Their flight took place amidst the acclamations of the neighbouring peasantry, and a conjecture might thereby be formed as to the disposition of the inhabitants of Franche-Comté, who, in general, regarded the invasion as a deliverance. Count de Latour divided his advanced guard into three corps, to observe the roads of Besançon, Gray, and Luxeuil. A detachment pushed as far as Baune-les-Dames.

The Russian General Count de Wittgenstein, who was invading Alsace, formed a communication on his right with Field Marshal Blucher, and on his left with General Count de Wrede, who advanced from Colmar towards Schelestadt

A corps of a thousand cossacks was detached from Altkirch towards Remiremont and Epinal, to reconnoitre in the valley of the Moselle. The combined operations of the Austro - Bavarian, Wurtemberg and Russian columns, had for their principal object the seizure of the whole chain of the Vosges, in concurrence with an army of Silesia. All their attention was directed towards this natural barrier of ancient France, which separates Alsace from Lorraine.

The Vosges commence in the neighbourhood of Giromagny and d'Epinal, stretching by Saint-Dié, Saverne, Phalzburg and Biche to the environs of Kayserlautern, where they take the name of Mont-Tonnerre. On the North, they extend to Bingen, and there confine the course of the Rhine by a barrier of rocks. On the South, they are united to Mont-Jura by a range of hills, behind which Befort is situated. The declivities towards Alsace and the Rhine are very steep; but on the side of Lorraine and the Moselle, the country assumes only the appearance of a slight elevation. The summits of the Vosges have, from their circular formation, acquired the name of *Ballons.* The highest is the *Ballon de Quebville.* The vallies are remarkable for their picturesque beauty; and the prospects afford a striking contrast to the monotonous plains of central France. A hardy race of mountaineers inhabit this rude country, whom Napoleon thought he should be able to

arm for the purpose of repelling the powers leagued against his preponderance.

Though unable to protect the Rhine, it was supposed that he would at least defend the Vosges. Was it not an imperious duty? For, if these defiles should be forced, the destinies of his empire must depend on a single battle, fought in the plains of Champagne. It was in vain that Marshal Victor and Marmont demanded reinforcements, without which it was impossible to defend this natural barrier. Napoleon could not send succours, for he no longer had an army; but such was the impudence of the gazetteers in the capital that they decisively announced both the levy *en masse* in the district of the Vosges, and the arrival at Epinal of 30,000 men from the garrisons of Onetz and Nancy.

It is true that government had ordered a general rising of the people in Alsace, the Vosges, the higher Saone, Jura, the Doubs, and Mont Blanc; a measure, by which a third part of the population was expected to be armed. On the approach of danger, the prefect of the Vosges had made an appeal to the mountaineers; but these uncultivated men, not seeing themselves supported by any regular army, capable of covering Lorraine, and moreover dispirited by the despotism, under which they had so long suffered, met the national *stimulus* with the *vis inertiæ* which renders all the efforts of power unavailing.

The allies had already thrown some parties into the Vosges. Marshal Victor concentrated his forces between Molzheim and Obernay, hoping to maintain himself there till he received reinforcements; but seeing himself abandoned, he fell back upon Bacarach. The Hetman Platoff, whose cossacks formed the advanced guard of General Wittgenstein's corps, pursued him with some thousands of light troops. At Rambervilliers, General Grekow was attacked and repulsed by General Montelegier; but the cossacks arriving in force, the retreat became universal throughout the French line.

General Duhesme, however occupied Saint-Dié; towards which General Deroi marched in force, according to instructions from General Wreder. At the approach of the Bavarian advanced guard, the French division posted itself in front of Saint-Dié, determined to make a rigorous resistance. Scarcely had the Bavarians arrived, when General Milhaud's cavalry, supported by the infantry and some pieces of cannon, assumed the offensive. The advanced guard of the Allies yielded the ground, and retrograded by the village of Sainte Marguerite, which was instantly occupied by the French. This movement, which might have ended in their seizing upon the defiles of the Vosges, was counteracted by the arrival of General Deroi with his whole brigade. He ranged them in order of battle, and gave orders for the re-capture of Sainte Marguerite. The combat had

hardly begun, when he was struck in the thigh by a ball. The wound forced him to transfer the command to Colonel Freyberg; who, full of zeal, attacked the French on their whole line, drove them before him, and entered the village, after having taken a hundred prisoners. The division of Duhesme, in its retreat, took a position at Raon-l'Etape.—Colonel Freyberg, having also possessed himself of Saint-Dié, dispatched strong patroles on the road to Luneville; while he in person followed and observed the retrograde movements of the French columns. General Count de Wrede now came to Saint-Dié, with the main army of Bavaria, immediately seized on the defiles of Bon-homme and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, and advanced with his corps to Rambervilliers and Bruyéres.

The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, on his side, reached Remiremont at the head of the 4th corps, on the 10th of January. There he learnt that a corps of four thousand men, principally composed of the young Imperial guard, occupied Epinal. He resolved to attack them on the 12th; and marched in advance, seconded by Hetman Platoff, who, stretching beyond the right of the French, took the direction of Charmes, for the purpose of cutting off their retreat. A few hundred mountaineers from the Vosges, who had been armed in haste, were soon dispersed; and no hope being now entertained at Epinal of being able to resist the cossacks, whose very name inspired terror,

the town was abandoned. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg pursued the French columns, preceded by the advanced guard of cossacks. General Grekow, who commanded it, reached the flank of the French as they were falling back on Thaon, charged their cavalry, dispersed it, and made some prisoners ; but the light artillery, impeded by the bad state of the roads through the forests of the Vosges, did not arrive 'till towards evening, which delay was injurious to the success of the pursuit.

Prince Scherbatoff, however, who had marched from Epinal to Charmes, encountered four columns of infantry, and five squadrons, protected by flying artillery. He fell back in his turn, being charged by the French cavalry with great intrepidity. But the troops of the Hetman and Prince Royal arrived to his assistance. General Kaisorow, attacked the last squares of the French infantry with his ordnance, and made dreadful havoc. The roads were covered with the killed and wounded, as well as baggage, and arms scattered in all directions. The Marshal Duke of Belluno continued his retrograde movement on Luneville. Thus the Vosges were forced at every point, and the whole country, on the right of the Prince of Schwartzenberg, was liberated.

The progress of the allies was equally rapid on the left. General Count Bubna quitted Geneva, leaving there, in the second line, a detachment commanded by General Zachmeister ; then pursuing his march, he penetrated into the department of

Jura, and entered Poligny on the 5th of January. The Hungarian cavalry immediately covered the country. The advanced guard approached Arbois, and a detachment took the direction of Lons-le-Saulnier, the chief place of the department. At the same time Salins was invested by General Scheiter.

At another point, Captain Beseredy of the Austrian hussars forced the bridge of the Doubs, near Dole, and forced General Lambert to evacuate the town, after a contest of two hours.

At the same time the Austrian division of Prince de Lichtenstein marched to Besançon, in combination with General Merulaz. They threw parties in all directions through the department of the Doubs. On the 9th the Austrian reserve, commanded by the Hereditary Prince of Hesse Homburg, coming from Dole, completed the investment of the fortress of Besançon, defended by eight thousand men.

General Zachmeister, having left Geneva with the rear guard of Count Bubna's corps, attacked Fort l'Excluse on the road to Lyons, and carried it. He then pushed detachments on the road to Lyons itself. The Austrians also seized on the right bank of the Saone, and sent cavalry towards Chalons and Macon, while they penetrated into the department of Ain in all directions. The hussars of Lichtenstein skirmished on the Lyons road to Nantua, and compelled a post of mounted *gens d'armes* to fall back upon a detachment of infantry; after which Nantua was occupied. Bourg-

en Bresse opposed resistance to the invaders. Excited by the agents of Napoleon, the inhabitants imprudently took up arms, and opened a brisk but unskilful fire in the suburbs, holding fifteen hundred Austrians for some time in check. At length the town was taken; and its generous enemies, though they permitted pillage for some hours, according to the rights and usages of war, carried their vengeance no further.

On the 14th of January, General Count Bubna addressed a proclamation to the inhabitants of the department of Ain, reproaching them for having taken up arms in defiance of the laws of war, which, by this infraction, placed their lives and fortunes at his discretion; but disdaining revenge, he offered a general pardon, and invited those inhabitants to return who had left their homes.

The Generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, foreseeing the effects which would ensue from a resistance contrary to the usages of Europe, had declared in an order of the day, on the 8th of January, that proper regard and protection should be extended to all peaceable Frenchmen; but that every inhabitant of town or country, who took up arms, not being a soldier, should be punished with death. He further gave notice that the towns, whose inhabitants offered resistance, should be consigned to the flames.

Unfortunately it was the French, or, more properly speaking, their Emperor, who had adopted this terrible practice towards the nations subjected to their arms; and it was against the French

themselves that the right of reprisals might now have been exercised. Every thing, however, which could soften the rigour of such proceedings, was resorted to by the Prince of Schwartzenberg; he sedulously enforced the strictest discipline in the army, and repressed with vigour every act of violence and rapine.

The three chief monarchs of the European league, the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia, animated with the noble desire of procuring peace, repaired to Basle, in order to consult, and act in concert as to this decisive campaign. The Emperor Alexander arrived from Friburg at Lærrach on the 11th of January. He passed the Rhine on the 13th, accompanied by the King of Prussia, with two divisions of the Russian guards, and the infantry of the Prussian guard, followed by the artillery of the reserve, and other troops, forming the flower of the confederated armies. History will preserve the recollection of this passage over the Rhine by the Czar of all the Russias, which was the more remarkable from its having taken place on the anniversary of the passage over the Niemen by the same monarch, after the deliverance of his states.

The Emperor of Austria, who had reached Basle on the preceding day, went to meet the two other sovereigns; and all three entered Basle on horseback together, followed by the troops above described. The latter defiled before the monarchs, and then marched several leagues, in the direction of Montbéliard.

The Czar had made to his army the following magnanimous declaration of his will, by an order of the day, published at Friburg on the 8th of January :—

"Soldiers,

"Your constancy and valour have conducted you from the banks of the Oka to the borders of the Rhine. New successes await you. We are about to pass the Rhine, and penetrate into a country which has long carried on a cruel war against us. We have saved and conferred lustre on our country; we have restored to Europe her liberty and independence. It remains for us to crown these great deeds by a solid peace, the object of all our desires. That repose and content may at length re-appear upon earth—that each nation may find happiness in its laws, and under its government—that religion, the arts, the sciences, and commerce may again flourish for the general good of nations—these are the wishes dearest to us. It is time that an end be made to war and destruction.

"Napoleon, when he penetrated into our provinces, made us feel his fury; but he has received a terrible chastisement. The wrath of heaven has struck him. Let us not imitate him, for inhumanity cannot be pleasing in the eyes of the Supreme Being. Let us forget the evil which the enemy has done to us—let us offer him peace and amity. The honour of the Russian arms consists in vanquishing, and afterwards in pardoning the vanquished like a

brother. This is the principle which our holy religion has engraven on our hearts. Love your enemies, and do unto them all the good you can, is a divine precept.

"Generosity of conduct will contribute more to your success than even the force of your arms. Yes, soldiers, your valour against those who resist, and your christian charity towards the peaceable inhabitants will, I doubt not, end your long fatigues, and procure you the reputation of a brave and virtuous people. It is by executing my supreme commands that you will obtain universal peace—the constant object of my wishes. Your zeal and obedience to your commanders are sureties that you will not forfeit the high reputation, which you have acquired."

To this noble and calm expression of pious moderation, on the part of the Russian Emperor, what did the tyrant of France oppose?—Abusive declamation, of which his journalists were the organs.

"The manifestoes of the allies," said they, "have no object but to paralyze the energy of the French nation, by endeavouring to persuade it that government refuses propositions which are just and liberal. Is it not Discord herself, who, assuming the appearance of Peace, has thrown into the midst of France that deceitful bait, the declaration of Frankfort.

"When the Emperor Napoleon marched at the head of the confederacy of kings against Rus-

sia, the only ally which England then had, he doubtless exercised an enormous preponderance beyond the limits of his empire. But the elements declared against him—his allies abandoned him one by one—they united their arms to those of Russia—and have themselves marched against France, now that she has returned within her natural limits. Has not this preponderance, then, changed hands? Is it not, at this very day, exercised by a power, which draws with it all the troops of Europe, and precipitates them upon a nation, only desirous of defending its own territory? Russia, which has successively crushed Sweden, divided Poland, devoured the Crimea, menaced Caucacus, and coveted the throne of Constantinople—Russia, which now governs Saxony, and perhaps all Germany—Russia, which throws into France her Asiatic legions—Russia declares that she fights against Napoleon's preponderance in Europe!

"What the allied powers assert in their proclamations is in manifest contradiction to what they want.

"The allies pass the Rhine to-day; and this, after loudly declaring that they only took up arms to force the French over the river. They occupy the Helvetian territory, after having announced to Europe that their armies would respect the ancient independence of the Swiss.

"Thus it is evident that their ostentatious declarations breathe peace and happiness, while their invasion is accompanied by rapine and death.

"Let us put no trust in an enemy, who is preceded by fallacious proclamations, calculated to enfeeble us by disunion, and conquer us by terror. Let us be deaf to his promises as to his threats, and let him learn that it is as impracticable to seduce as to divide us."

These recriminations, invented only to obscure the truth, could not impose upon a nation groaning under the weight of the calamities, which war had caused. Arms alone would not, on this occasion, have been secure of triumph, for the destinies of the earth depended on the moral disposition of the people. We have seen the rapid progress of the grand allied army. The offensive movements of the other troops, belonging to the confederated powers, appeared to be all formed on one vast plan, extending from Gluckstadt to the province of Bearn, in which the British army was acting, under the command of Lord Wellington. The French troops were far from presenting a similar regularity of project. Feeble as to numbers, and every where retreating, they were without connection, and without a central point.

Their supreme chief, who had so often led them to victory, and who had never ceased to torture Europe by his baleful activity, now assisted in the invasion of France from his palace. The astonishing indifference which he displayed, as to passing events, provoked general indignation. The flatterers of the throne always asserted that Napoleon was digesting, *in magnanimous silence,* prodigies of activity and vigilance, which would pro-

bably surprise the world more than his most brilliant successes. They represented the organization of the Parisian national guard as one of the great ideas which secure confidence; whereas it was well known that Napoleon had, for a long time, resisted the plan of arming the Parisians. He considered them in reality as the secret enemies of his power; and he had recourse to the most minute precautions, when he at length consented to the formation of the municipal legions.

We see him then, after having insulted the Legislative Body, in search of some new mode, by which he hoped to obtain the public opinion in his favor. It was for this purpose that, mounting his horse, and suddenly issuing from the Tuileries, he rode through the streets and public places of the capital; without guards, but surrounded by the agents of police, and disguised *gens d'armes*, who watched over the safety of his person. It was for this purpose that he conversed with workmen and the poor, throwing gold in profusion to the lowest order of society. It was for this purpose too, that he affected to invoke the confidence of the nation, by declaring that he no longer aimed at regaining his conquests; but merely at obtaining a peace, founded on the preservation of the integrity of the empire.

In a concerted address, his Senate took care to notice this change in his political views, or rather this acknowledgment of Fortune's vicissitudes.

"Power," said the orator, "is strengthened

by keeping within bounds, and the art of promoting the happiness of nations is the first policy of monarchs; for empires, like men, have their days of mourning and prosperity.

"The enemy has invaded our territory, and wishes to penetrate into our provinces; but it is amidst great circumstances that great nations are distinguished."

The addresses of the Senate, and the declarations of government were paraphrased by the extraordinary commissaries, who were sent into the provinces.

"The Allies," said the senator Monge, who had been delegated to Liege, "the Allies wish to ruin and destroy the French nation; and if they apparently attack its government only, it is because they know that France would no longer exist as a nation, if the edifice were deprived of a key to the arch."

Napoleon, affecting perfect security, made a pompous enumeration of the corps and camps of reserve, which were forming at Meaux, Soissons, Troyes, and Arcis-sur-Aube. These camps, he said, were about to be strengthened by the national guard, which was hastening from all sides to defend the country; by a hundred squadrons of cavalry, to be also in reserve; and by a park of artillery, consisting of six hundred guns, which had already reached Chalons-sur-Marne.

"The moment of general muster approaches," exclaimed those organs of government, the journa-

lists. "A few days more of patience, and the signal will be given—then woe to the vanquished!

"Let the echoes of the Alps and the grottoes of the Rhine repeat this universal cry: *To arms, to arms*! *Peace is in our courage*! Let every province become a camp, and let France have no more citizens than soldiers!"

Thus the danger was only avowed, in the hope that it would produce a national movement. "This would have been effected a month since," added the pensioners of Buonaparte, "if we had less confided in the apparent moderation of the enemy. Who could have imagined that, instead of establishing the repose of the world, the Allies, deaf to the cries of desolated Europe, would invade the sacred territory of France, and form the insensate project of dismembering it? It is to check the national energy, it is to prevent unanimity of sentiment, that they precede their march by proclamations, founded on falsehood."

Such writings crowded on each other like public events. From the Scheld to the Adour, all the allied armies were advancing towards the centre of France. Since the 10th of January, the army of Field-Marshal Blucher had been spread the whole length of the Moselle from Treves to Nancy; and the Duke of Ragusa was in full retreat between the Sarre and the Meuse.

He had, at first, occupied the defiles of Kayserlautern; but had soon found himself under the necessity of falling back by forced marches, in order

that the army of Silesia might not penetrate on his rear by the Vosges Mountains. As he thus retreated on the Sarre, he destroyed all the bridges, and put Sarrelouis and Bitche in a state of defence; but on the 9th of January, Major-General Kopoff passed the Sarre with his cossacks, not far from Sarreguemines, which he seized upon; and the bridge was re-constructed. Field-Marshal Blucher in person also threw a bridge over the river at Blidestroff, intending to pass his cavalry, for the purpose of attacking the Duke of Ragusa; but the latter, suspecting the intention of his adversary, abandoned his position, and retreated on Saint-Avold. The bridges of Sarrebruck and Sarreguemines having been re-established towards mid-day, the Prussian cavalry and advanced-guard began their march, and encountered the French rear-guard at Saint-Avold. The 1st battalion of the tenth regiment of reserve carried the town, while Marshal Marmont hastily pursued his way to Metz. General Yorke pursued him in this direction, ordered the blockade of Sarrelouis, and detached a brigade against Thionville, as well as another against Sarrebruck.

General Sacken's corps marched, at the same time, on Nancy and Point-a-Mousson, while the advanced guard of General York pursued the corps of Marshal Marmont to the gates of Metz.

Marshal Victor, harassed in like manner by General Wittgenstein, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, and Count de Wrede, retired from the

defiles of the Vosges to Void, beyond the Meuse, on the same line as Marshal Marmont.

The rigour of the season, the bad state of the roads, and repeated *bivouacs*, multiplied the disorders, with which the French troops were afflicted—troops so completely fatigued by the disasters of the late campaign, which now appeared to be prolonged. The hospitals, in the rear of the line of retreat, were crowded with sick, and the roads were covered with dead horses.

While the army of Silesia pursued its invading march towards the Meuse and the Marne, the Allies equally acted on the offensive towards the Scheld; and, by combined movements, obtained the entire occupation of Belgium, without a general battle.

General Count Maison, who had been appointed to the command of the first corps of the Antwerp army, hastened to complete the defence of Bergen-op-Zoom, and the places on the left bank of the Scheld. The troops, which the Allies had in the North, were employed in blockading Wesel, Noorden, Gorcum, Devinter, and the Helder. The last mentioned place is the key of Zuyder-Zee, and Admiral Verheuil, faithful to the cause of Napoleon, defended it with obstinacy.

General Bulow, commander in chief of the third corps of the Russian army, assuming the offensive, left Breda on the 11th of January, with ten to twelve thousand men; and advanced to the positions of Hoogstraten and Wartel on the Mark,

which were defended by a French division, under General Rognet. The enemy was at first checked on the road to Meer; but soon redoubled his attacks on Loenhout and Hoogstraten. The Prussian columns seized upon these two positions, at the moment that the English division, under Sir Thomas Graham, came up. It joined in the action, and then took the great road from Bergen-op-Zoom to Antwerp. General Roguet, seeing himself turned, suddenly effected his retreat on Winigem, his left resting on Merxen, near Antwerp. A corps instantly sallied from that place to support him.

The 12th passed in movements. New levies arrived at Antwerp, and enabled the French Generals to deploy before that important place about twenty thousand men, on a line extending several leagues.

On the 13th General Bulow, in conjunction with Sir Thomas Graham, moved in force towards Winigem. His right wing was composed of Dutch and English, his left of Russians, and the centre of Prussians. In spite of the valour displayed by the French, the Allies carried the village of Merxen. The English were checked at Rosereal, and assailed by a destructive fire; but they charged the left wing of the French army with the bayonet, and its commander, General Avy, was killed. Some fugitives were drowned in the Scheld; and some of the French troops, by birth Belgians, went over to the enemy. The whole French army fell back on Antwerp. The Prussians and English

skirmished as far as the suburbs, which the French hastily destroyed. The town was a prey to anxiety and terror. Some houses in the country having been set on fire, and the flames being visible at a distance, a false report obtained circulation that the Antwerp fleet had been burnt after a vigorous attack. This rumour found its way from Belgium to Paris.

Generals Bulow and Graham, finding Antwerp in a state of defence, concentrated their forces at the distance of some leagues; and soon afterwards a bold manœuvre, on the part of General Count Maison, relieved that place. The General moved on Louvain, by Campine and Lierre; while the division of Barrois took the direction of Arshot and Diest, in order to form a line of defence between Brussels and the Meuse.

Antwerp was supplied with provisions, and its line, on the side of the Scheld, was in a formidable state. The Allied Generals now endeavoured by manifestoes, to cause an insurrection through the departments of Belgium, and transform hostilities into a revolutionary war.

The double offensive movement of General Bulow towards the Scheld, and of the Silesian army towards the Meuse, compelled the Duke of Tarentum, who guarded the Rhine between Gueldres and Cologne, to evacuate the left bank of the river, for the purpose of protecting ancient France. At this time, Nimeguen having been taken by the corps of

the Russian General Winzingerode, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum had removed his head quarters to Crefeld, resting his right on the fortress of Wesel. The ferment was at its height in the Netherlands. The people, weary of Napoleon's yoke, invited, as it were, the invasion of the Allies. The French administration levied an extraordinary contribution on the towns and villages, compelling the wealthy, by military executions, to advance money without delay. Menaced at the same time by an enraged people, and by General Winzingerode's corps, while he was also called upon to succour France herself, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum, after having ordered his different columns to fall back, abandoned Gueldres. On the 14th of January, he fixed his head-quarters at Maestricht, occupying Liege, and Charlemont; and observing the right flank of the Silesian army, detachments of which had pushed as far as Treves.

General Winzingerode observed this retrogade movement; and on the 13th of January, effected the passage of the Rhine at Dusseldorf, Richsort, and Essemberg. Nearly thirty thousand Russians immediately spread over the left bank. A column of fourteen hundred French, which still remained at Neuss, fell back on Juliers, at the first approach of the cossacks. Generals Sebastiani and Arrighi took the same road, after some slight affairs with the advanced guard of General Count Saint-Priest, who filed with his division, by Coblentz and Bonn towards Cologne. On the arrival of the Russians,

the inhabitants of the latter place testified their joy by meeting them, and offering refreshments.

On the 18th of January, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum removed his head-quarters to Namur, where his whole army was collected, amounting to fifteen thousand infantry, and about four thousand cavalry, including the brigades of *gen d'armerie*, which had fallen back from every point of Belgium.

Before the Duke quitted Maestricht, he addressed a proclamation to his troops, for the purpose of reviving their spirits, announcing new hostilities and numerous reinforcements. "It is for our country," said he, "that we are about to fight. Let her not be longer laid waste. The Emperor and France have their eyes upon us. To conquer or to perish ought to be our rallying cry."

The generals felt the necessity of sustaining the glory of the French arms, which a single man, had sullied by his senseless enterprizes. Napoleon himself neglected nothing, which could palliate the progress of the enemy. The abandonment of the Vosges, the evacuation of Belgium, and the retrograde movement of all the French columns, were represented as the result of *general dispositions.* To such an excess was credulity carried, that a sort of vulgar opinion considered the free entry of the enemy into France, as forming an essential part of a vast plan, meditated by Napoleon, to annihilate, by a single blow, the armies of the European league.

The invasion, nevertheless, assumed from day to day a more menacing aspect. The generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, fixed his head-quarters at Vesoul, and the corps of General Count Guilay marched on Langres.

This town is one of the most elevated points of France, and the position consequently most formidable. The mountain, which forms its base, is a continuation, as it were, of the Vosges, and formed an additional obstacle to the invasion of the central provinces.

Napoleon had resolved to entrust the defence of Langres to his own guards, which repaired thither from Paris and the north by forced marches, under the command of Marshal Mortier, Duke of Treviso. Along the whole of this line, which was most threatened, the Commissaries and Agents of Government encouraged the inhabitants of the towns and villages to defend their homes. Arms were distributed to them, and they were organized under the appellations of National Guards, and Volunteer Associations. Thus was the population about to be exposed by the ambitious despotism of a single man. No sooner had the Allies crossed the Rhine, than Napoleon dispatched officers to make plans of all the towns on the different roads to the capital; intending to fortify them, as far as haste would allow. At Troyes one of these officers assembled the Authorities, and communicated to them the result of his labours towards a plan of defence. An objection,

however, was made to it, upon the ground of its sacrificing all the suburbs, "We have burnt much better," answered the colonel with cruel *sang-froid.*

Langres had been fixed upon for commencing the execution of this barbarous system. The national guard was there raised and armed under the orders of experienced officers; but in the villages no progress of the same nature was made, for a general torpor seemed to prevail.

Under these circumstances, the first scouts of the Austrian cavalry appeared in the neighbourhood of Langres.

A reconnoitring party, stationed at Fay-Billot, having immediately fallen back, the inhabitants of Langres flew to arms; the gates were shut, and a guard placed at them, while patroles paraded the streets throughout the night. On the following morning, at dawn of day, an officer, escorted by a party of hussars, presented himself at the gate Dijon, and insisted upon entering to confer with the Mayor. He was desired to withdraw, but not obeying, the guard fired upon him; he was not wounded and now retired. Hussars were seen upon the roads in the neighbourhood all day. The national guard reconnoitred as far as the *Faubourg des Anges,* distant a quarter of a league from the town.

Towards five o'clock in the evening, a second officer presented himself, in the name of Count de Thorn, accompanied by two hussars, while ten

more remained at a short distance. A lieutenant of grenadiers, belonging to the national guard, ordered his men to fire—one of the hussars and two horses fell. The inhabitants were thrown into consternation, and expected nothing less than that the town would be sacked; when all at once the first columns of the imperial guard were discerned in full march towards the gate Chaumont. At the sight of veterans, covered with noble wounds and decorations, the recompence of valour, joy succeeded to panic. These brave men, the very essence of the army, after having undergone a long and fatiguing march, exclaimed, "We are come for the purpose of securing to Langres her ancient appellation—*Langres the Virgin.*"

In fact, no hostile commander had ever yet entered it. On the 21st of January, the Marshal Duke of Treviso fixed his head-quarters there, and nearly twelve thousand men, forming three divisions of the imperial guard, were collected in the place. On the following day, the Austrian advanced guard, consisting of both cavalry and infantry, was attacked and repulsed by a reconnoitring party, in the direction of Chateau-Vaudin, two leagues from Langres. Other detachments had engagements, near Fay-Billot and Gray. The smart skirmishes at Malandon, and Pirée, were preludes to more decisive contests.

The Marshal Prince of Schwartzenberg being informed that the imperial guard had arrived at Langres, concluded that a numerous French army

was assembling there; and immediately left Vesoul with a sufficient force to ensure success, in his attack on this important position. The principal Russian army, under Count Barclay de Tolly, had orders to support him.

Count Wittgenstein's corps, the right of which rested on the army of Silesia, and the left on the army of Count Barclay de Tolly, was also in motion. The Russian and Prussian reserves filed on Vesoul, and the three allied sovereigns repaired thither.

No other troops, however, arrived to suppor the imperial guard. Could it be expected of this corps, that it was to remain exposed to the attacks of a whole army, which was able to turn and destroy it? On the 16th Marshal Mortier began his retreat on Chaumont, leaving two hundred men and some pieces of artillery; not so much for the purpose of defending the place, as that of obtaining a capitulation, by a semblance of warlike attitude. The inhabitants being thus abandoned to themselves, nothing remained but to implore the commisseration of the enemy, whom they had offended by firing on the messengers. This had been done through the direct influence of an emissary, sent for the purpose by Napoleon.

On the 17th, General Count Giulay pushed forward his advanced guard, but he rejected the demand of capitulation; and Langres was compelled to surrender at discretion. The proclamations, before mentioned to have been made by the

generalissimo, devoted the place to pillage and flames, for having opposed in arms the entry of the Allied Powers; but the Prince of Schwartzenberg commuted this sentence of destruction for a pecuniary contribution, the security of which he established by taking the richest inhabitants away as hostages.

Thus, however highly provoked, a spirit of moderation and humanity appeared to animate the confederated nations, which, from the Volga to the Rhine, had risen against the domination of Napoleon.

CHAPTER IV.

Offensive operations of the Allied Armies—Retrograde movements of the French divisions—Capture of Toul—Entry of Marshal Blucher into Nancy—His Declaration to the Notables of that place—The Allies divide the Provinces on the left bank of the Rhine into four governments—Napoleon grounds his security on the line of strong holds, and the national energy, which he endeavours to excite—The people remain quiet spectators of the struggle—March of the Cossacks—Mode of combat adopted by these light troops of the North—March of the Austrian corps, under Count Bubna, towards the Saone and Lyon—Resistance of Chalons—Capture of Macon—Lyon is menaced, summoned and delivered—Fall of Chalons—March of the Austrians on Dijon—Tumult at that place—The Authority of the extraordinary Commissary, Count de Segur, is disavowed—The Austrians enter Dijon—Arrival of the Allied Monarchs at Langres—First battle of Bar-sur-Aube—Retreat of the Imperial Guard on Troyes—State of the public spirit on the approach of danger—Napoleon confers the Regency on the Empress Maria Louisa—His farewell address to the Officers of the Parisian National Guard—He departs to put himself at the head of his Army—Difference of opinions upon this subject.

THE Prince of Schwartzenberg being master of Langres, wished also to seize on Chaumont; and driving the imperial guard before him, caused the fourth corps of the allied army, under the Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, also to assume the offensive. This movement took place at the same time that the three monarchs arrived, that the Russian corps of Wittgenstein had made its progress, and that the army of Silesia was rapidly advancing towards the Meuse.

The Marshal Duke of Ragusa having been

pursued by General York to the gates of Metz, and having provided for the safety of that place, took a position on the heights of Gravelottes; but being unceasingly pressed by the manœuvres of Marshal Blucher, he continued his retrograde march towards Saint Mihiel, and on the 19th of January arrived in front of Verdun, without having had any serious engagement. As Lorraine could not be defended, his object in retreating was to effect, with as little loss as possible, the concentration of his divisions towards Champagne, between the Marne and the Seine. The Russian corps, under Kleist, was in reserve near Thionville. The principal part of the cavalry had invested Metz, and the largest part of the Field Marshal's army filed from Saint-Avold on Nancy, with the requisitions levied for its support.

The Hetman Platoff arrived at Neufchateau with his cossacks, and his patroles advanced beyond the town. Other cossacks, under the command of Prince Scherbatoff, took the direction of Toul.

Since the 13th of January, the head-quarters of Count de Wrede had been at Saint Dié, and Captain Baron de Gravenreuth, of the seventh light horse, had pushed forward to Luneville. On the 16th the Count quitted his position, taking the direction of Charmes; and the troops under his command, were stationed between Neufchateau, Chatenay, and Saint Christophe. This movement secured a communication between the Bavarian

corps and the army of Silesia, which formed a junction with the grand army, under the Prince of Schwartzenberg, between the 19th and 20th, on the road from Chaumont to Troyes. Thus the combined armies presented a most formidable line to the troops, hastily collected by the generals of Napoleon.

Nancy, the capital and ornament of Lorrain, was abandoned. The Prince of the Moskwa, Marshal Ney, one of the most able commanders that the French army can boast of possessing; had set out for this place on the 9th of January, upon the positive assurances of Napoleon that he would find in it fifteen thousand men; partly regulars, and partly new levies full of zealous ardour. The marshal found, however, neither an army, nor the means of defence. The levy *en masse* had been as unsuccessful in the Meurthe, as in the Vosges, and the Higher Saone. The Prince of the Moskwa, therefore, being neither able to preserve nor assist the place, evacuated it on the 14th of January. On the same day Prince Biron de Courland, who was the first that appeared before the city, sent the keys to General Sacken; who forwarded them, in like manner, to Field-Marshal Blucher. The gallant veteran dispatched them to the Imperial head-quarters; but the officer, who was the bearer of them, met the Emperor Alexander on the road to Vesoul. The Czar detached two of the keys, and transmitted them to the King of Prussia, with a gracious message, an

evident proof of the delicate attentions and mutual regard, which united these august sovereigns.

The communications, between the army of Silesia and that of the generalissimo, were secured by Nancy and Charmes, where General Count dè Wrede had fixed his head quarters. The French corps had retreated to the opposite side of the Meuse; but a few brigades halted at Toul. This town, which is protected by a wall and some ramparts, was garrisoned both with cavalry and infantry. General Sacken approached it by the bridge of Saint Vincent. Field-Marshal Blucher, being informed that Langres had been taken by the generalissimo, and having further learnt that the corps of Marshals Ney, Marmont, and Victor, had crossed the Meuse, at Verdun, at Saint Michel, Chammercy, and Vaucoleurs, issued a formal order to carry the town of Toul on the side of Void; and General Sacken made his preparations accordingly; but Toul, perceiving that all assistance was cut off, surrendered to General Count Lieren. Four pieces of cannon, four hundred men, and two stand of colours fell into the hands of the Allies.

It was on the 20th of January, that Field-Marshal Blucher entered the city of Nancy. A deputation of the magistrates and notables having met the gallant veteran, and addressed him, they received the following declaration in reply, which explained the motives of the war, and was more important than any that had yet been made by a hostile general on the French territory.

"Providence, in its justice," said he, "has at last conducted our arms to France. All Europe has, at length, been roused from her false security by the insatiable ambition of a man, who, during fourteen years, has despotically ruled over the French nation.

"The people of the Volga, the Danube, the Elbe, the Thames, and the Tagus, have left their homes, and entered your once happy land. The greater part of these nations, formerly attached to France, are now become her enemies—and why? Because they have been forced to it by the ambition of an unbridled conqueror. Has not Napoleon compelled men of peaceful habits to become warriors, in order to resist the contempt, the dishonour, the despotism, and the extortion of his agents?

"God, in his justice, has passed sentence, and six hundred thousand Frenchmen have disappeared from the face of the earth in two campaigns, deplorable victims of their master's ambition—a master prodigal of the blood of a nation, to which he is a stranger!

"And where are the fruits of all this blood shed? What is the present appearance of France? A whole generation cut off by the sword of war, commerce destroyed, agriculture discouraged, the people groaning under the weight of imports; the *gens d'armes* training your sons and nephews under the colours of a despot, who leaves them to die in misery; innumerable spies, who glide unperceived

into society, and private families, that they may report to their leader, Savary, the sighs and complaints produced by so infamous a government; military and special commissions, which, by sentences of death, stifle every impulse of generous feeling! Such, oh Frenchmen, are the fruits of the interminable wars, which have constituted the misfortunes of Europe. It is only, then, for the advantage of a few generals, intendants, and commissaries, that the war is continued. It is only that they may enrich themselves by the pillage of our territories, and by that shameless extortion, which, you, oh unhappy people, have so long endured.

"The peace, which we have offered, and which has been haughtily rejected, or met with equivocating dissimulation, we will procure by the bravery of our troops upon your territory, and if it must be so, in your capital. Together with that, we will secure our national independence, the liberty of commerce, and that of the seas. It is we, who fight for this liberty, and not your master, who wishes to shut all the ports, which a beneficent Providence has given to nations for the increase of their prosperity.

"It is doubtless painful to me, that I cannot spare you the evils inseparable from war; but I will at least do all in my power to diminish their burden. Be not afraid of reprisals for the devastations, committed in our country by the troops of your tyrant. We are not come hither to avenge

ourselves. We levy war against him alone, who wishes to perpetuate it.

"I will suppress the most obnoxious of your imposts, the consolidated duties, the excise on salt, and the registry tax. Would that it were in my power, brave inhabitants of Lorraine, to recal the good old times, when the sage paternal government of your dukes rendered you so happy!"

The Field-Marshal found some auxiliaries at Nancy, and its environs. In the hurry of their retreat, the French had left behind them the Spanish prisoners of war. General Sotomayor, thirty officers, and a great number of soldiers were, by this omission, released. The marshal offered them the choice of either returning to their country by Holland, or joining the army of Silesia against the common enemy. Almost all chose the latter, and were immediately formed into four auxiliary companies.

The offensive movements of the Allies continued throughout their immense line of operations. General Sacken's corps put itself in motion to drive the French divisions from the Meuse; and the corps of Langeron advanced to Toul as a reserve. General York blockaded, at one time, Sarrelouis, Luxembourg, Thionville, and Metz.—His cavalry pushed as far as Verdun, and the *corps-de-reserve* of Kleist also marched on Metz.—Towards the centre of the line, the advanced guard of General Count de Wittgenstein had already left Nancy in the rear.

In vain did the agents of Buonaparte renew their efforts to arm the nation at large. The people, being delivered from oppressive taxes, seeing the French divisions retreat on every side, and finding that the Allies conducted themselves with moderation, were unwilling to take any part in a contest, which they considered as purely military.

From Nancy Field-Marshal Blucher removed his head-quarters to Saint-Dizier, and General Count de Wrede to Andelot, between Neufchateau and Chaumont.

By their parallel and combined march, the Allies availed themselves of all the advantages, which the French government had possessed in the rich and fertile provinces, successively wrested from it. They augmented their resources, in the same proportion as France lost them, with regard to men, money, and subsistence.

The districts on the left bank of the Rhine, which they had conquered, were divided into four governments, viz. the government of the Lower Rhine, comprising the departments of the Roer, the Ourthe, and the Lower Meuse—Aix-la-Chapelle was the seat of it; the government of the intermediate Rhine, comprehending the departments of Mont Tonnerre, the Sarre, the Rhine, and the Moselle—Treves was the seat of it; the government of the Higher Rhine, of which Colmar was the chief place, and which contained the departments of the Higher and Lower Rhine; and finally, at Landau was fixed the seat of govern-

ment of the countries detached from Switzerland, the Higher Saone, the Doub, and Jura. The commerce of the Rhine resumed its course, and a degree of tranquillity prevailed through the provinces, which could hardly have been thought possible in the midst of such a concussion. Napoleon had now no communication with this part of the country.

The allies always satisfied themselves with blockading the fortresses, or even simply placing a corps of observation near them, without interrupting their march by regular sieges. It was, nevertheless, the line of these fortresses, which seemed to inspire Napoleon and his ministers with a sort of confidence. " In that quarter," said they, " Mayence, Landau, Strasburg, Schelestadt, Neubrisac, and Huninguen border upon and command the courses of the Rhine. In this, Thionville, Metz, Sarrelouis, Luxemburg, Longwy, intersect several important roads. Further off, Juliers, Antwerp, Wesel, Maestricht, Vanloo, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Flushing cover Belgium; behind which is the almost impregnable line of Lisle, Condé, and Valenciennes: besides towns of less importance, such as Béfort and Bitche in the Vosges, and Fort Joux in the Jura. These places have braved all the efforts of our enemies, who, in spite of the rapidity of a perfidious invasion, have only been able to render themselves masters of the towns, which were absolutely open at their approach. Compelled as they will be to spread their

army, in order to observe or invest so many fortified points, what constant inquietude must they feel at the mere prospect of a reverse, with which so many causes combine to threaten them! How would they effect their retreat in the midst of a martial population, penetrated with a sentiment of national honour? The loss of a single battle would be sufficient to destroy them. With what ardour the French, hitherto shut up in the strong holds, would rush out to pursue the fugitives! How would they be supported by the peasantry, now groaning under the weight of requisitions and outrages! The enemy, notwithtanding, neglects the fortresses upon the Meuse, and advances by Saint Dizier and Langres, in the face of so many perils, as if determined to wipe off the stain of former defeats upon the plains of Champagne."

Such were the grounds of hope, which Napoleon thought proper to indulge and promulgate; as if, in a war of invasion, the fate of fortified places did not depend upon gaining a battle.

The capture of Langres, however, the occupation of Nancy, the evacuation of Belgium, the retreat of the imperial guard on the road to Troyes, and the progress of the allies on their whole line, formed a striking contrast to the apparent security of Buonaparte, who still remained inactively at his palace of the Tuileries. The spirits of the public were oppressed by uncertainty, mingled with terror. It was universally felt that the long drama, or rather the frightful tragedy

was approaching to its final scene; and the idea of what the catastrophe might possibly be, chilled every heart with fear. "If I sink, my fall shall affright the universe." Such was the sinister prophecy attributed to Napoleon. What confidence could his enfeebled scattered troops inspire, when his best soldiers, his own guard, were retreating, for want of support, against enemies who seemed to multiply even on the soil of France, and who were always preceded by clouds of cossacks; the very name and appearance of whom produced dismay and submission.

"These hordes," is was said, "receive no order but from their immediate leaders. Plunderers, alike by character and necessity, the cossacks advance twenty or thirty leagues from the main army. If they find an open town in their way, they announce themselves as the scouts or advanced guard of a formidable corps, which is closely following them. The alarmed inhabitants are lavish in giving them all sorts of supplies, and prepare before-hand the requisitions for the expected army. The cossacks depart, and no army makes its appearance. They now take another direction; announce, in a similar manner, the arrival of several columns; and thus spread alarm through a whole province. Hence the reports, which, passing from one to another, and being magnified by pusillanimity, alarm the timid, and on the following day prove to be unfounded. Bold only towards the cowardly, the cossacks fly if they meet

with the least resistance. It is not to combat us that they over-run our lovely country, but to plunder and desolate it."

The allies, on the contrary, represented the cossacks of the Black Sea and the Don as hardy, intrepid, indefatigable men. "The cossacks," said they, "are not only the eyes of the army, but they fight in the line; they disperse squadrons; they attack squares of infantry; they swim across rivers; and suddenly appearing in the rear of an enemy, whether retreating or victorious, they always produce alarm and disorder."

Amidst this diversity of opinion, this conflict of hope and terror, an unforeseen event re-animated the party of Napoleon, and imparted to the humbled conqueror a greater degree of confidence and audacity.

Lyons, the second city of the empire, and the focus of industry, was attacked by the Austrians, and, contrary to all hope, preserved.

The occupation of Geneva, where General Bubna had established a provisional administration, opened to the Austrians the departments of Ain, Jura, and Mont-Blanc, as well as the road to Lyons. Detachments guarded Geneva and Fort l'Ecluse. In the Valois, all the inhabitants flew to arms, embracing with ardour the cause of the allies, under the protection of Colonel Baron de Simbschen, whose activity never relaxed for a moment. The occupation of the roads to Simplon and Mount Bernard opened to him the plains of

Italy, and from Doma Dossola to the gates of Milan, he found no other French force than the line of revenue officers. The colonel also entered Savoy, and on the 14th of January published at Thonon an appeal to the Savoyards, which Count Sonaz, a gentleman of the country, repeated in the name of Victor Emanuel, King of Sardinia.

The departments of Isère and Mont Blanc appeared, however, to be covered by measures of general defence ; the national guards and part of the *levy en masse* being organized by Generals Marchand, Laroche, and Dessaix.

But the most serious attack was directed against the Rhone and the Saone. In a word, Lyons was fixed upon to be the prize of the Austrian corps under General Bubna. He had sent his light troops from Bourg-en-Bresse in all directions, hoping to draw the attention of the French from the real point of attack. His cavalry had advanced towards Chalons and Macon. The prefects and commissaries immediately endeavoured to organize a force and defend the Saone. It was to be formed of all healthy men between twenty and fifty years of age ; and their employment was to consist in guarding the bridges, fords, and passages ; in defending the points attacked, and repulsing the enemy. A third part of the population was to be thus trained immediately ; and in default of muskets, fowling-pieces, sabres, pikes, scythes, and agricultural implements were to be used. The formation of a battalion of national guards, in each

canton, was to complete these measures, and the tocsin was to be sounded, on the first alarm being given as to the approach of the enemy. Such were the instructions, which Napoleon's ministers had expedited to the prefects and military commandants.

When General Bubna's light troops appeared before Macon, the mayor of the town, and that of Saint Laurent, or rather all the inhabitants, wishing to preserve their property, allowed the bridge to be occupied by fifty hussars; but the people at Chalons, protected by the national guard of Autun, and by the inhabitants of Charolais, who had descended from their mountains, barricaded the bridges, and constructed redoubts; whereby Chalons was preserved from a *coup-de-main*. Napoleon exhibited signs of frightful joy, when he heard of this. "What a contrast!" exclaimed he in his official bulletin, "between the conduct of Macon, which betrayed the public confidence, and the heroic devotion displayed by the inhabitants of Chalons! The people of Macon have covered themselves with disgrace."—The innumerable pensioners at Paris extolled this defence of Chalons, which was, in fact never seriously attacked; while they consigned Macon to infamy, which was an open town without troops or artillery, and yielded only to necessity.

Meanwhile, General Count Bubna, who had marched on Dole with the main body of his army, suddenly changed his direction, and hastily ad-

vanced on Lyons. General Meusnier occupied this important city, but he had not many troops. On the first report of Lyons being in danger, Buonaparte felt the necessity of defending the second place in his empire; for the reduction of it would afford a fatal example, which it behoved him to avoid. The senator, Chaptal, who was one of the extraordinary commissaries, and Count de Bondy, prefect of the Rhone, received orders to excite resistance on the part of the people, as much as possible, till reinforcements should arrive, which were in full march from Catalonia, and expected with the more confidence, because they formed part of the army under the command of Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albufera—an army distinguished alike by its courage and discipline. Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, was also upon the road, to put himself at the head of the columns, which he flattered himself that he should soon collect in Lyons to secure the defence of the place.

But the Austrians already occupied Miribel, Montluel, Chalamont, and Maximieux. Their advanced posts were not more than three leagues from Lyons, and there were not sufficient troops in that city to protect it from a *coup-de-main.* The rich, and those who were in easy circumstances, chose to withdraw at a crisis, the issue of which might be like that of 1793, when Lyons was almost entirely ruined. They abandoned the city, and took refuge in all parts of the South, far from the tumult and dangers of war: The merchandize,

sent from Lyons to the mountains of Beaujolais and Auvergne, in order to be then concealed, is said to have been worth a hundred millions of francs. The extraordinary commissary, the prefect of the Rhone, and the principal members of the local administration fled. Marshal Augereau arrived; but not finding any means of defence, pursued his way to Valence on the Rhone, hoping there to collect his troops. General Meresnier, with a handful of soldiers, seemed willing to brave the storm; and the populace was similarly disposed. The decisive moment was come, and so certain was Count Bulow of entering Lyons without resistance, that instead of acting, he sent an officer, from his head-quarters at Miribel, to summon the city; at the same time pushing his advanced posts to the gates by the road of Saint-Clair. The Austrian officer appeared on the 17th, and demanded admittance, for the purpose of presenting the summons to the Mayor. On seeing him, the populace assembled upon the quays, and the Place-des-Terreaux, manifesting hostile intentions, and shouting: "Down with him! Into the river with him!" The officer was alarmed, and being conducted to General Meusnier, the latter availed himself of this panic to enlarge upon the number of his troops, and the exasperated state of the public mind; advising the messenger to disguise himself, for the purpose of escaping the blind fury of a licentious populace. The officer was then carefully escorted to the advanced posts, and General Bubna, being induced by his report to hesitate, Lyons escaped.

On the following day, towards evening, a brisk fire was interchanged by the French and Austrian advanced posts. The latter fell back, and the Austrians penetrated into the suburbs; but without pursuing their circumspect attack any further. The inhabitants, who were in great consternation, fully expected that day-light would complete the conquest of the city; but General Meusnier ordered the troops of the line to retake the advanced posts. Accordingly, the twenty-fourth regiment advanced to the village of Calvire, an important military post, and compelled the leading detachments of the enemy to retreat. The same day, at six o'clock in the evening, twelve hundred infantry of the line arrived from Valence. An immense crowd went out to meet them, and welcomed them as deliverers with shouts of joy. Suddenly all the houses in the Guillotiere suburb, the quay of the Rhone, and the Place-des-Terreaux were illuminated in honour of these brave men, who came to defend a city, menaced by twelve to fifteen thousand Austrians. The heads of their columns immediately advanced on the enemy, who now ceased all offensive demonstrations. Twenty pieces of cannon and nine hundred more men then entered Lyons, and on the 21st arrived two hundred light-horse, with Marshal Augereau at their head.

General Count Bulow instantly evacuated all the posts, which he occupied in the environs of the city, and continuing his retrograde movement on the 22d, arrived at Montluel, Maximieux, and

the bridge of Ain. Lyons and Macon were thus released at the same time.

Marshal Augereau forthwith addressed an energetic proclamation to the inhabitants of Lyons, and made dispositions to assume the offensive, hoping to expel the Austrians from Chambery, which they had entered; then to march directly on Geneva; and afterwards to manœuvre on the rear of the grand Allied Army, in Franche-Comté, and Switzerland.

Chalons-sur-Saone, in spite of its first resistance, was now destined to fall; General Legrand having in vain tried to collect a sufficient force. The Prince of Hesse Homburg attacked and took it, as well as some pieces of cannon.

Count Bubna occupied all the country from the neighbourhood of Grenoble on his left to the gates of Macon on his right, having his centre on Bourg-en-Bresse.

But the capture of Chalons could not compensate for the check received before Lyons. The moral effect too, in favour of Buonaparte's cause, was prodigious; and from that time the national defence was not only deemed practicable, but the most salutary measure to be adopted.

Though Lyons had thus succeeded, however, in escaping an Austrian corps, which acted with much irresolution, another city of France, (almost as celebrated, though not so rich and populous) Dijon, the ancient capital of Burgundy, fell before a detachment of the grand army, under the Prince

of Schwartzenberg. The Prince of Hesse Homburg was ordered to march with his corps from Chalons to Dijon, in order to secure that important place.

The danger was imminent. Napoleon had, at the same time, to fear invasion by the two great roads of Champagne and Burgundy. Count-de-Segur had been sent, as an extraordinary commissary, in this double direction to Troyes, Chaumont, Dijon, and all the threatened points. Every where he had endeavoured to rouse the national energy. After having told the inhabitants of Troyes, that Napoleon had renounced every project of aggrandisement, that he had accepted all the conditions of peace, and that he was advancing in person at the head of his armies to give the enemy battle, the Count added: "But the enemy will not be so foolish as to proceed into the midst of a nation, which is rising and arming in every quarter. Inhabitants of the Aube, the sacrifices now demanded of you are *the last*."

He repeated these assurances to the inhabitants of Chaumont, who were in consternation at the retrogade movement of the French troops. "The Emperor's army of eighty thousand men," said he, "which will shortly arrive among you, would annihilate our enemies if they dared to penetrate further into the interior. They would find their retreat cut off by the army of the Rhine, and the national guards would deprive them of all subsistence. Inhabitants of the Higher Marne, the Emperor has decided that these sacrifices shall be *the last*."

He continued his progress, repeating these promises; but they could not calm the fears of a trembling population, which the roaring of cannon, the approach of light horse, and the fear of pillage and death threw into despair. The inhabitants of the villages fled towards Dijon, taking with them their most valuable effects, and their cattle and flocks, hoping that they would find refuge and protection in that part of the country, which they supposed to be defended by a formidable army. Vain expectation! Dijon was only defended by its national guards, hardly yet organized; and by two or three hundred soldiers of the line, under the command of General Bellair. Could this feeble force oppose the march of a powerful army, supported by artillery? Besides, forty thousand fugitives had now run hither from every point of Burgundy, encumbering Dijon, and spreading panic through the place. The inhabitants plainly perceived the dangers of a defence, which might entail ruin upon them; but the extraordinary commissary insisted on decisive measures, in the name of the Emperor and the country. Agitation and tumult had attained their utmost height; and at the approach of the Austrian scouts, the magistracy was boldly opposed by the people, who refused to arm. The authority of Count de Segur was disavowed by general assent, and he had no alternative but flight with the other agents of Napoleon. At their departure, the populace saluted them with manifest signs of censure and con-

demnation. From that moment the municipal authority alone was acknowledged, and the city of Dijon was at liberty to capitulate with an enemy, against whom all resistance was become impossible.

On the 19th of January, eight Austrian cuirassiers and a quarter-master presented themselves at the gate of Saint Nicholas, and summoned the city to surrender. The inhabitants replied, that they would not yield to so weak a detachment. Towards noon, two thousand cavalry and fifteen hundred infantry arrived, with twelve pieces of cannon; and the gates were opened to them, after assurances had been given that every one's person and property should be respected. In the Austrian staff were the Prince of Lichstenstein, the Prince of Hesse Homburg, General Klenau, and General Nostiz. On the following day another Prince of Hesse Homburg arrived, who was the commander-in-chief of the corps. About twelve thousand men successively made their appearance, accompanied by a fine squadron of cavalry, under the immediate orders of General Count de Colloredo. This commander took the direction of Troyes; a detachment filed off towards Auxerre; and the Prince of Hesse Homburg marched on Auxonne. The Prince of Schwartzenberg went in person to Dijon, for the purpose of inspecting the troops; directly after which he departed for Langres to meet the Emperor Alexander, who entered that place on the 22nd of January, where he was joined

on the 24th by the Emperor of Austria, and the Prince de Metternich. The same day became celebrated in the annals of this campaign by the first battle of Bar-sur-Aube.

The Marshal Duke of Treviso had neither been able to defend Langres nor Chaumont, from want of reinforcements. An enemy, superior in numbers, had successively attacked both his flanks; and he had fallen back to Bar-sur-Aube, after having surprised and defeated, in his march, two Wurtemberg battalions. He occupied the positions of this town with the principal part of the imperial guard, and the Italian division of General Christiani, forming nearly thirteen thousand men. These troops, so formidable by their valour, were accompanied by fifty pieces of artillery, but only a small quantity of ammunition. The Marshal was resolved to defend the position of Bar-sur-Aube, which not only covered Troyes, but kept the enemy from the road to Chalons-sur-Marne, where the principal part of Napoleon's forces were at that time assembling. The heights of Bar were furnished with artillery, and the troops took strong positions, which unfortunately, were not in regular continuity. The advanced guard was posted beyond the town at the bridge of Aube, near Fontaines.

The Allied Sovereigns immediately formed the project of carrying the position of Bar, which became necessary in order to effect the junction of the grand army, coming by the Chaumont

road, with that of Silesia, which marched through Lorraine. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, and the general of cavalry, Count Guilay, united their two corps, for the purpose of conjointly attacking the Duke of Treviso. Their junction formed a mass of more than thirty thousand men against thirteen thousand. The attack commenced at noon. The advanced guard of the French was assailed with great force, and driven back to the bridge of Fontaines. There eight thousand of the Imperial guard and an Italian division, with ten pieces of cannon and four howitzers, occupied a position, which commanded all the ground in front of the line of attack. The Marshal Duke of Treviso, taking advantage of this circumstance, attacked the Austrian troops, under General Giulay, with impetuosity. French intrepidity prevailed, and the Austrian ranks were broken in all parts. Major Keck fell in the midst of the combat, pierced by bayonets. Nothing could have resisted this brilliant attack, if the Austrians, who were thrown into complete disorder, had not rallied under the protection of the brigade of Trenck, and a formidable display of artillery. The French battalions re-took the position of Fontaines. The Marshal Duke of Treviso, knowing the importance of this point, which commands the communications of the Aube with Troyes, exerted every effort to maintain himself there; always hoping to receive reinforcements from Troyes or

Chalons, which were incessantly promised, but never arrived.

At the same moment that the Austrians had commenced their offensive movement in front, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg had attacked the post of Colomberg on his right. Having made himself master of it, he pursued the French to Lignol. The troops, overpowered by numerical superiority, could not face the enemy, and never rallied till they reached Rouvre, where they put themselves under the protection of twenty pieces of cannon, ranged upon favourable ground. The Prince Royal immediately opened a strong fire of artillery on the whole line; for the purpose of giving his troops time to concentrate. His intention was to renew the attack on the following day, in Bar-sur-Aube itself. This unfortunate place, situated between two fires, was in a most deplorable state. The reverberation of thundering artillery, which, as it were, surrounded the town, caused shocks to be felt by the inhabitants, like those of an earthquake, or volcanic eruption. The sight of the wounded and dying, with the fear of becoming, at the termination of the conquest, the prey of a greedy soldiery, added to the horrors of so dreadful a situation. Hope did not dawn in any degree upon them, 'till the following day also dawned. Marshal Mortier, convinced that no reinforcements would arrive in time to assist him, and wishing to spare not only the town,

but the blood of so many brave men, evacuated all his positions in the night, after having lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners, nearly two thousand men—a loss the more sensibly felt, because they principally consisted of the imperial guard, so renowned for valour. During the combat, the Italian soldiers and those of Brabant quitted the French colours, and went over to the enemy.

Such was the first battle of Bar-sur-Aube, the most sanguinary and remarkable that had yet taken place, since the Allies passed the Rhine.

This offensive movement would have been still more decisive if, at the moment of attack and by a bold march, five to six thousand men had advanced on Troyes by the road of Bar-sur-Seine. Troyes had not then more than two hundred men within its walls, and the Allies would easily have seized upon the bridge of Guillotiere, while the Marshal Duke of Treviso was still ten leagues from it. They would, by the step here pointed out, have forced him to throw himself on Joinville, and leave the road to Paris entirely uncovered.

From this it may be inferred that slowness and circumspection presided over the operations of the grand allied army; and that the idea of encountering, on their own soil, the conquerors of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland, caused a degree of timidity.

Be that as it may, Marshal Mortier fell back towards Troyes in good order, and took a position

at the bridges of Guillotiere sur les Barces, without having been pursued.

But the success of the battle of Bar-sur-Aube was incontestible. In vain did Napoleon wish to avoid the acknowledgment, by maintaining a profound silence. The road from Troyes was covered with the wounded; and most inauspicious reports were circulated through the capital. Every one was astonished that the French troops, of which the number was greatly exaggerated, should be all marching to Chalons-sur-Marne, while the Allies were triumphantly advancing in the direction of Troyes. They had invaded the frontiers from Lyons to Antwerp, extending in depth forty leagues from the Rhine. At this moment they were close upon the gates of Troyes, and the plains of Champagne; yet Napoleon had not quitted his accustomed place of refuge, the Tuileries. He passed his regiments in review, and multiplied his parades, displaying with ostentation the troops which he had hastily collected; and, on the succeeding day, the journals doubled and trebled the number with puerile exaggeration. According to their accounts, more than two hundred thousand men had been seen at Paris in the space of a single month; and yet the enemy was approaching the very heart of the empire, without any force being opposed to him, which was capable of arresting his progress.

All Napoleon's policy consisted in trying to

impart a conviction of security to his generals, courtiers, and the nation at large.

It would have been difficult to deceive the persons, attached to his person, as to the real state of affairs, if their blindness had not been equal to the excess of their servile devotion. Nevertheless, they watched, with an eye of inquietude, the looks, attitudes, and gestures of the man, on whom their offices and fortunes depended. It was well known that Napoleon often retired to the subterraneous apartments of the palace, and that there he sat alone, surrounded by maps of the theatre of war, with a pair of compasses in his hand, combining and arranging, in profound thought, all the parts of the vast plan, which was to preserve his crown, and the empire.

One day his trusty centinels designedly allowed a few of the courtiers, who were most familiar with their master, to approach the entrance of the cavern, as they came to announce to the Emperor that the Senate was assembled. They found Napoleon in a sort of ecstacy, throwing the compasses on the earth, and exclaiming, like Archimedes, when he came out of the bath: "*I have discovered it* !—I have them !—Not one shall escape !"—"Never," said the courtiers to each other, full of admiration, "never was the Emperor inspired with such high conceptions. Our enemies are lost, and the country saved."

It was still reported that all the roads were

covered with soldiers; yet it was, nevertheless, known that an army could scarcely be formed; that the conscripts, exposed to every privation at so severe a season, were quite discouraged; that the contractors, not receiving any payment on account, refused any longer to furnish supplies; and that the distress was universal.

Alarming decrees followed close upon each other. One of them ordained the formation of six regiments of *tirailleurs*, and six of *voltigeurs* from the newly-raised guards, to be composed of volunteers between twenty and fifty years old, being workmen out of employ, or military, who had before served. But these pretended volunteers were, in fact, taken from the work-house, into which the stagnation of commerce had forced them; and being deprived of work, they had now no resource but to join the armies.

The approach of the crisis gave a kind of freedom to public opinion. The tongue seemed, as it were, unfettered. Nothing could longer suppress the dissatisfaction felt in every quarter, which was equally avowed in the private circle and at public places; so completely was the power of the police neutralized by the terror felt on the part of its own agents. Irresolute and trembling for themselves, they dared not excite the animosity, against which they had no power to act. Even the very mouths of informers were closed by fear. But this general and secret police of Napoleon; this palladium of his despotism, had also an elegant party

connected with it—his men of letters, whose business it was to collect, and digest, in a style of *bel-esprit*, the conversations most abounding with genius, wit, and gaiety in the saloons of the metropolis, as well as literary anecdotes, general remarks on society, and agreeable bagatelles, destined to amuse the terrible Napoleon in the midst of his sanguinary career. The noble labours of academicians, thus pensioned by the police, now assumed a most gloomy colour. Every morning these men (dishonoured as they were, yet favorably received in society) went to the head of the police, who issued the bulletin of intelligence, which was to be circulated in the course of the day—a system become so common, that it now only excited a smile of contempt. The enormous lever of the press was the only one, which government could cause to work upon the public spirit.

At length the departure of Napoleon was announced; and his speech, in taking leave of his counsellors and courtiers, betrayed his fears. He gave them to understand, in a vague and mysterious manner, that, during the great manœuvres which he had in contemplation, it was possible for hordes of cossacks to outflank the wings of his armies, and insult the barriers of Paris.

It was in these mournful circumstances that he conferred the regency, during his absence, on the Empress Maria Louisa, an interesting victim, whose countenance lately glowed with all the bloom

of health, but whose pallid features were now, alas, marked by anxiety and care.

An affecting scene took place on this occasion. It was the 23d of January, and all the officers of the National Guard were admitted into the Tuileries. Napoleon appeared in the midst of them, holding the hands of his consort and son. He addressed them in an animated speech, and perhaps for the first time expressed himself in a tone, which seemed to come from the soul. His sentiments were noble and elevated, and made a deep impression on all his surrounding auditors. Never had he before spoken with such natural eloquence, and the effect was most forcible, when he himself presented to the body of officers the Empress, and King of Rome; adding that he was about to place himself at the head of his armies, and that he confided to them his capital, his consort, and his son. The Empress, mingling her tears with those of the national officers, received their oath like a wife, a mother, and a sovereign.

The impression made by this pathetic scene vanished, however, on the following day; when it was learnt that the whole had been a studied contrivance; and that Napoleon had borrowed the pauses, gestures, and inflexions of the most celebrated actor of the metropolis, (M. Talma) to increase the effect of his harangue.

At length he departed on the 25th of January, full of vexation and fury. For the last time he

came out of the royal palace, to oppose the Allies by activity without plan, and courage without foresight.

His courtiers, his counsellors, his senate, his numerous pensioners, in fact his whole party remained full of hope and confidence, still relying on the good fortune of Napoleon. "The country is saved, the Emperor has departed," said they. "From every side the armies advance, the national guards are in motion, and the conscripts come boldly forward. Every one seems to have lost sight of his individual interest, and to be occupied only in that of the nation. Doubtless the struggle, in which France is involved, must be considered terrible; the movements of the Allies are distressing to some parts of the country; but no real success, no victory, no conquered fortress, has yet afforded them a triumph upon French ground. The allied monarchs thought us divided, without courage, without public spirit; they imagined that they would find a government devoid of power and resources; but the sentiment of national honor and the common defence has united all Frenchmen, and the cry of 'to arms!' has re-echoed from every quarter.

"Our enemies will, therefore, have to contend against our armies and the whole nation, under the command of a sovereign, abounding with activity and genius; they must not calculate upon our weakness, or division. No matter how the danger arose—it exists—and national honor allows only one reflection—the necessity of repelling it."

The general and independent opinion was not, however, in unison with these sentiments. "The moment approaches," said the discontented, "when this man, who had formed the dark design of trampling under foot the whole human race, will sink into nothingness. It is in vain that he attempts to confound his name and interests with those of all France; she has been united to him by no ties, but those which his usurpation and tyranny imposed. He has been compelled, in spite of himself, to avow his fear. Like a condemned gladiator, he stands to-day in his last arena, with clouded downcast look. No token of public encouragement tends to reanimate him. No one addresses to Heaven a prayer for his success. His enemies are numerous, and formidable—his partisans are sad, silent, and devoid of energy. How has he quitted the metropolis? What are the tender pledges of regard and affection, which he gives, at his departure, to his good city of Paris? The pillage of the bank and of all the public coffers—thus causing capital to disappear, and consequently checking circulation. But the dreadful moment is at length arrived, when the universe is united against the oppressor, and indignant nations all unite together to shake off the yoke."

Such were the contradictory sentiments, by which France was agitated, both in town and country, at this great crisis, when the fate of many millions was about to be decided by arms!

CHAPTER V.

Arrival of Napoleon at Chalons-sur-Marne—Concentration of his army—March of the Silesian army upon the Aube—Napoleon attacks and carries Saint-Dizier—He hastily takes a direction on the Aube, by the forest Montierender—He surprises the army of Silesia at Brienne—First battle of Brienne—The two armies rest in the presence of each other—Battle of Brienne and Rothiere—Retreat of the French army on Troyes.

To prevent the junction of the Allied armies in the east—to create around them a system of defence, or natural insurrection—to oppose them in partial battles—to drive them back beyond the Rhine, or to destroy them by the promptitude of his manœuvres—such was the plan of campaign, formed by Napoleon, when he placed himself at the head of the army, collected with so much difficulty. His direction towards Chalons-sur-Marne, and his ulterior movements proved his lively impatience to come into contest with the army of Silesia, which was in his eyes the most formidable. He was, perhaps, excited by the reputation of activity and vigour, which Field-Marshal Blucher had acquired; for with this commander he evidently desired to measure himself.

This army had, at the time, passed the Marne, and the principal corps of it, commanded by General Sacken, was taking a diagonal direction on the Aube, to join the grand army between Bar-sur-Aube and Brienne, in order to counteract the enterprizing spirit of Buonaparte. The movement of Ge-

neral Sacken's corps commenced by the march of two columns on the 22d of January, the one upon Ligny, the other on Vaucouleurs, Gondrecourt, and Joinville; Field-Marshal Blucher and his staff followed this last column.

In order to make an imposing appearance, the different corps of the French army, or rather the skeletons of corps, occupied a very extensive line; it was indeed impossible that they could oppose a formidable mass to the enemy. The instructions to the Marshals of the empire, which recently emanated from the palace of the Tuileries, had for their object the concentration of the different corps towards Chalons and Vitry from the 20th to the 25th of January, and the public attention was directed towards the plains of Chalons, where it was supposed that the first blow, on the part of the Emperor, was to be struck.

The Marshal Duke of Tarentum fell back before the Russian corps of General Winzingerode by Namur, Rocroi, Vervins, Rhetel, and Rheims, abandoning the Ardennes where the people were in arms against Napoleon.

The Marshal Duke of Ragusa, on leaving Verdun, had in vain intrenched himself in the defiles of Clermont en Argenne, known by the name of the Ylettes; he therefore fell back on Chalons.

The Marshal Prince of the Moskwa, after having occupied Bar-sur-Ornain, concentrated himself on Ligny and Saint Dizier, where Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno, was posted.

Major-General the Prince of Wagram, to whom Napoleon owed so many victories, had arrived at Ligny from Paris, for the purpose of conferring with the Marshals. It was decided that the Duke of Belluno should remain at Ligny and Bar, until the newly levied guards arrived to reinforce the army of Chalons.

Napoleon himself had as yet no suspicion of the real intentions of the Allies, and endeavoured to ascertain them in two quarters. On the 22d the Duke of Belluno pushed a reconnoitring party of two thousand horse towards Saint-Aubin, where the French cavalry were directing the fire of a battery on the Russian dragoons, under General Wasiltchikoff; but the reconnoitring party, finding that the enemy would not yield the ground, fell back. On the 23d, Lieutenant-General Prince de Tscherbatoff attacked the town of Ligny, and took it by main force, leaving three hundred killed and wounded at the foot of the intrenchments. The French brigade, who had valiantly defended the place, threw themselves into Saint-Dizier, where they were, on the following day attacked, and driven back on Vitry. Prince Tscherbatoff, in consequence, marched towards Brienne to re-effect his junction with General Sacken's corps. Lieutenant-General Lanskoi held the position of Saint Dizier, with an advanced guard of eight hundred horse, to observe the Chalons road; retaining the power of joining General York, who advanced by Saint-Mihiel.

Amidst these movements, the precursors of more decisive actions, Napoleon arrived at Chalons-sur-Marne on the 26th, towards eleven o'clock at night. On the following day, having witnessed the horrible disorder, which prevailed in the army, and perceiving the miserable condition of the new levies, he is said to have struck his forehead, and exclaimed: "*All is lost*!" But being re-animated by the martial aspect of his veteran troops, whom nothing could discourage, and by the recollection of the science and valour so often displayed on the part of his generals, he took his departure, arrived at Vitry-sur-Marne on the 27th, passed rapidly to Saint Dizier, and immediately caused Lieutenant General Lanskoi to be attacked by the corps of Marshal Victor. The Russians bent before the French cavalry in two successive combats; one of them in the suburbs of Saint-Dizier, from which they were driven with some loss; and General Duhesme pressed their rear guard so closely that they had not even time to make their escape, over the bridge, to the wretched road between Saint-Dizier and Montierender. At eight o'clock in the morning, Napoleon made his appearance at Saint-Dizier, amidst songs of triumph. His whole army, consisting of sixty thousand men, manœuvred in this direction, and he thereby hoped to enforce the evacuation of Bar-sur-Aube, Chaumont, and even Lorraine, on the part of the Allies, by inspiring fears for the safety of their rear and magazines. On his arrival at Saint-Dizier, he

considered whether he could push as far as Nancy, and beyond it. He thought that he might, by making himself master of the Vosges, cut off the enemy's communication with the Rhine and Germany; nay, perhaps, annihilate them in the centre of France. This bold project, which two months afterwards was the cause of his ruin, already formed a part of his gigantic combinations; but Blucher's approach, of which he had then some indications, and the apprehension of leaving his capital uncovered, made him resolve to march rapidly on the Aube.

The thaw retarded the progress of the columns, and embarrassed the convoys. The army became restless and impatient; it would have been disheartened but for the success of Saint-Dizier, which revived the soldier's confidence. The spirit, which the peasantry now displayed, afforded hopes of a strong national defence, and a system, by which this was turned to the best advantage for Napoleon, was adopted on the whole line of operations. Whenever the enemy appeared, the bells were rung, and being repeated from one village to another, made the strength of the enemy known by a signal agreed upon. According to the report of the country people, whenever the enemy appeared in any force, it was with a cry of: "*Death to Napoleon! Long live the Regency!*"

On the 28th, the army put itself in motion from Saint-Dizier by the forest of Montierender, a

road which the rains and thaw had deluged—a road almost impassable even in summer. It required incredible exertion to effect the transit of the artillery; and this first march fatigued the troops so much, that it was night before they reached Montierender.

On the 29th, they proceeded on Brienne by Longeville. Report now stated that the Allies were marching in great force by the road of Doulevant to Paris, along the right bank of the Aube; that they had advanced as far as Brienne, and taken possession of it. Napoleon, therefore, became more impatient than ever to come in contact with the enemy.

In the mean time, the Russian corps of Lieutenant-General Lanskoi, which had been driven from Saint-Dizier, had rallied on the army of Silesia, near Doulevant. Field-Marshal Blucher concentrated the corps of General Sacken, at Brienne, and a part of that, which was under General Langeron; he had also pushed corps of cavalry towards Arcis and Troyes, which were occupied by the infantry of the Imperial guard. On the first intelligence of Napoleon's movements, the generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, had, not far from Joinville, caused a junction of the army, under the command of General Count de Wrede, with the Russian corps under General Count Wittgenstein, in order to support General York, who found himself menaced by the march

of the French on Saint-Dizier. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg was stationed, with the fourth corps, between Bar-sur-Aube and Brienne; and General Guilay, near Bar-sur-Aube. The grand Allied army was put in motion towards the same place from Chaumont-en-Bassiguy. The corps of General Kleist passed the Marne, near Saint-Mihiel, on the 2d of February, to communicate with General York, who was ordered to manœuvre on Chalons. Such were the movements of the different Allied corps.

Field-Marshal Blucher, having been informed by his scouts that the French had made their appearance at Vassy and Montierender, and not being immediately able to discover the intentions of Napoleon, hastened to concentrate his disposable forces near Brienne; confiding the watch to the Prince Royal of Wurtemburg, who had taken a position at Maisons, and thus formed the right wing of the Silesian army. On the 28th, he was joined by the advanced guard of General Wittgenstein's corps, under the command of Count Pahlen. Towards noon a French Lieutenant-Colonel, who had been taken prisoner by the cossacks between Vitry and Arcis, was brought to the Field Marshal. He was the bearer of important dispatches, announcing that Napoleon, at the head of his army, had determined to assume the offensive by Saint-Dizier, and ordering the Marshal Duke of Treviso to quit Troyes and the Aube, in order to approach the right wing of the Emperor's army.

The Field Marshal, therefore, clearly perceived that Napoleon, having concentrated all his forces, wished to give battle; and resolved in consequence, to draw nearer the grand Allied army, which might arrive at Bar-sur-Aube before the 1st of February. Blucher had, moreover, ascertained that there was, between this town and Brienne, a village called Brannes, which afforded a strong position, naturally connected with that of Maisons, then occupied by the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg. At the moment that the order for departure was issued, the French appeared in strong columns, advancing on Brienne. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and the Field Marshal was far from having expected so prompt and bold an attack.

Brienne-le-Chateau, which is situated at the foot of a high hill near the Aube, is an open town, and the houses only constructed of wood. There are two streets in it, of which the one descends from the castle, and terminates in the road to Joinville; the other leads from Arcis to Bar-sur-Aube. The castle is situated behind the town on the summit of the hill, and the latter loses itself by a gentle slope in a forest, which over-shadows the two banks of the Aube. There is a spacious road from the castle to the town, which are not more than a thousand yards asunder. The hilly district continues along the Aube, towards Lesmont; and on the other side of the town towards Montierender, immense plains extend towards Bar-sur-Aube.

It was at the military school, formerly established at the castle of Brienne, that Napoleon pursued his studies. There he acquired his first knowledge of the art of war—there he lighted the torch of that genius, which wished to embrace the world—there too, in the very district, which had been the cradle of his future greatness, Napoleon now sought the armies of all Europe to fight a battle, which might decide his fate for ever.

This castle of Brienne, celebrated from so many circumstances, was at present occupied by Field-Marshal Blucher and his staff. The Russian corps of General Alsufieff had been thrown into the town, while that of General Sacken was stationed in columns on the road from Brienne to Rothiere. Two thousand cavalry, commanded by General Count Pahlen, covered the approaches and avenues of the town. They were unexpectedly attacked by a mass of French cavalry, under the command of Generals Milhaud and Grouchy, and by a division of horse guards, under General Lefebvre-Desnouettes. This strong body of cavalry made several vigorous charges, and seized the heights of Perthes on the right of the road. General Count Pahlen, being compelled to give way before superior numbers, turned towards Brienne, passed through the town, and formed a junction with General Sacken.

At the same time Marshal Ney, Prince of the Moskwa, advanced on Brienne by the road from Mezzieres, at the head of six battalions in

close column, with flying artillery; while General Chateau, bending to the right with several battalions of grenadiers, introduced himself into the park, being favored by the inequalities of the ground. The grenadiers, approaching cautiously but resolutely, surprised the Prussian staff in the castle, at the moment that Field-Marshal Blucher was at table with his officers. The Marshal, General Gueisnau, chief of the staff, and other superior officers, had only time to throw themselves upon their horses, and escape down some steps (every other outlet being secured against them) after which they gained the woods, and joined the corps of General Sacken.

Blucher now perceived that he was attacked by Buonaparte's whole army, an event which exceedingly surprised him, and which deranged all his plans of concentration. It was requisite, however, to resist the attack, for the honor of his army. He, therefore, immediately ordered the combined cavalry of General Sacken and Count Pahlen to advance, by a rapid movement, against the left wing of the French army, which was not provided with horse. This was effected just as night was coming on, and two batteries were taken by the Allies; the left wing of the French falling back towards another position, in rear of the point of attack.

The attempts of Marshal Ney upon Brienne had at first been unsuccessful, from the spirited resistance made by General Alsufieff. The Prince

renewed his attack with fresh troops from the right wing; but they were repulsed like the rest. The castle and part of the town were, however, soon in the possession of the French grenadiers, who had penetrated from the park by a passage, which the Allies had neglected to guard with cannon and infantry. General Sacken's corps immediately made a charge; and the combat now became so furious that the streets, the avenues, the orchards, and other places were covered with the dead. Such was the resistance that Napoleon, wishing to dislodge the Russians at any price, caused shells to be thrown into this unfortunate town, which, being built of wood, was immediately in flames. The women, the children, and almost all the inhabitants of the circumjacent town and villages, had fled to the neighbouring forests; and their lamentations were mingled with the reverberated roar of artillery and musketry. The flames spread with frightful rapidity; and the Russians encouraged their progress, in order to impede the march of the French. M. de Hardenberg, nephew of the Prussian chancellor, was taken at the foot of the castle-hill, when he was endeavouring to rally the fugitives, and arrest the progress of the destructive element. The Allies maintained themselves in Brienne till eight o'clock at night, in spite of reiterated attacks by the national guards, and a brigade of General Meusnier's division. They even attempted to retake the castle, which the brave lieutenant-colonel of the 56th regiment defended

with an intrepidity, deserving the greatest praise. The avenues, and the great flight of steps leading to the park, were blocked up by the bodies of slaughtered Russians and Prussians. The contest was prolonged till eleven at night, amidst the groans of the wounded, and by the dreadful light of musketry, howitzers, and cannon. The infantry of both armies had frequent recourse to the bayonet, and several charges of cavalry augmented the horror of this midnight battle.

Napoleon gallopped through the ranks, and even exposed himself to the fire of musketry, for the purpose of inspiring his troops with courage; part of the raw levies having exhibited signs of weakness and alarm, at being placed in so dangerous a situation.—These young soldiers, exhausted in the end by so many forced marches, through roads covered with mire, and not receiving any alimentary support, sunk beneath the pressure of fatigue. Towards the close of the combat, the cossacks, passing in the rear of the army, attacked Buonaparte's escort, but were repulsed. Several carbine and pistol shots were fired on both sides. The Prince of Wagram had his hat turned by the blow of a lance, and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, while charging at the head of the guard, fell covered with wounds.

The army of Silesia, having in vain resumed its endeavours to force the French from Brienne, retired and took a position behind the town to-

wards Rothiere. With the exception of the castle and a few houses, the place was nothing but a heap of ashes.

Napoleon established himself and passed the night at Mezieres, situated a league and a half in front of the field of battle; and the following day made his entry into Brienne.

What must then have been his sensations! Such was the only advantage which he could derive from this sanguinary conflict, on which he had founded hopes of the greatest results. His whole army had fallen by surprise upon a part of the Silesian army, consisting of not more than twenty thousand men, and these had only been driven a single league from the field of battle, without its being in Buonaparte's power to prevent their junction with the main army of the Allies.

Such was the anxiety and impatience to become conquerors, that authentic letters from the French head-quarters, and even from the Duke of Bassano, secretary of state, announced the capture of fifteen thousand prisoners and forty pieces of cannon, in this first engagement. The account of the pretended triumph spread through Paris with the rapidity of lightning.

"Does it not appear," exclaimed the journalists, "as if Antæus had struck the earth, and innumerable legions had sprung out of it? In ten days the Emperor will command the finest and

most powerful army ever yet beheld. Lord Cathcart may now, indeed, write to inform the English minister, that the Allies *are well received* in France."

Every thing was resorted to for the purpose of stimulating the public. It was affirmed that the couriers had seen the fifteen thousand prisoners, and that they had further seen the artillery of the enemy ingulphed among the bogs of Vassy, as well as the forty pieces of cannon taken in the battle.

The troops, added these accounts, were seconded in their amazing efforts by the peasantry, who fell upon the flying enemy with scythes, pikes, forks, and iron crows, besides being most useful in bringing from every side prisoners, equipage, and cannon. Other circumstances tended to strengthen these reports, the principal part of which were fabricated. After the victory, Napoleon had entered Brienne. Was it not here that he began to develope those great talents, which were destined one day to astonish Europe, and preserve France? On such a field, Victory could not be faithless to him.

These fictions and dreams were confirmed from the *Bureau d'esprit public*, in the police department before described. The illusion, however, soon vanished ; though it did not give way to truth, but to that frightful silence and oppression which often precedes some mournful event.

On the morning after the battle Napoleon caused his left wing to manœuvre; and towards noon his whole army advanced in column. Batteries, advantageously placed, cannonaded the enemy's line of cavalry, which, being also attacked by General Grouchy and the Marshal Duke of Belluno, retired to Trannes, beyond the village of Rothiere. Napoleon immediately posted all his army on the heights of Brienne, thus commanding the plain, and displaying his superior force to the army of Silesia. On the 31st of January, he again deployed in the low ground, between Rothiere and Trannes, occupying a woody height, in advance of the latter position. Thus situated, the armies passed two days in sight of each other.

General York had, in the mean time, attacked and retaken Saint Dizier, while Count Wittgenstein, supported by General Wrede, had repulsed the corps of the Marshal Duke of Ragusa near Vassy, on the 29th. The Marshal's rear-guard experienced some loss on this occasion, when he was marching on Montierender, to effect his junction with the army of the Emperor.

At the same time the grand allied army had approached the Aube, while the corps of the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg was on its march from Maisons, and might reach Trannes on the 1st of February. Count Guilay moved to its support between Besancourt and Argonval. The General-Commandant, Count Barclay de Tolly,

had united the Russian and Prussian guards, to form a reserve, in a contracted position between Colombay and Bar-sur-Aube, from which he could support any point that was menaced. The Prince of Schwartzenberg announced these dispositions to Field-Marshal Blucher; ordering him to attack the French with his united forces, while General Count Wrede made an offensive movement from Doulevane-sur-Brienne.

It could not be Napoleon's intention to fight a general battle in these immense plains, where the inferiority of his force, especially as to cavalry, might well make him dread a disastrous issue. Besides his army having the Aube behind it, no retreat was open on Troyes or Arcis, but by the bridge of Lasmont, below Brienne, which had been destroyed to stop the progress of the enemy, and which now, to answer the purpose of the French, must have been re-constructed in a single day.

Part of the French army, therefore, filed towards Lesmont, when, towards noon, they perceived the columns of the Allies in march upon the villages of Rothieré and Dienville, where the main body was stationed.

Napoleon was thus reduced to the necessity of fighting, not merely to secure a retreat, but to save his army. The length of the enemy's line compelled him to extend his own, in order that he might not be outflanked. His whole force was disposed in two lines of battle, and ranged under a

chain of hills; his right resting on Dienville, and the Aube; his centre on Rothiere; and his left on the hamlet of Gibrie. Rothiere was defended by strong columns, and considerable detachments occupied Petit Mesnil, while Chaumenil and Morvelliers covered the rear of the position. At this point the Marshal Duke of Belluno commanded. At another important position, which covered the left flank, the sixth corps was posted, under the command of Marshal the Duke of Ragusa. General Duhesme defended Rothiere, and General Gerard had orders to protect the two banks of the Aube, by occupying Dienville. The infantry was ranged in masses upon the flanks of the villages, and in the villages themselves, which were bordered on all sides with artillery.

During these offensive dispositions, the three columns of attack, belonging to the allied army, and formed under Field-Marshal Blucher, were taking directions in the following order:—General Sacken's corps descended from the heights of Trannes into the plain of Rothiere, and advanced on the centre of the French in two strong divisions, the one upon Brienne, by the Dienville road, and the other on Rothiere itself. The Austrian corps of General Count Giulay, and the Russian corps of General Alsufieff, formed General Sacken's reserve. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg manœuvred, with the right wing, from Eclance on Chaumenil and Gibrie, in order to attack the left of the French; opening by his

combined march, the communication with General Count de Wrede, who also manœuvred on Chaumenil by Doulevant. General Barclay de Tolly occupied the heights and defiles of Trannes.

It was half-past twelve at noon, when the cavalry of the two armies, ranged in battle array between the two lines, put themselves in motion. Skirmishes and a brisk cannonade were the prelude to the universal attack. The general attention was soon attracted by a violent discharge of artillery and musketry on the left wing of the French army. It was the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, who, having made his way through the forest of Eclance, began the battle by attacking the woody heights of Gibrie, which were defended by several regiments. In spite of their obstinate resistance, he made himself master both of the heights and the hamlet. Napoleon, being afraid that he might be outflanked, caused a corps to manœuvre on his left; and Gibrie was retaken at the point of the bayonet by the French, who displayed uncommon valour. The Prince Royal, having in his turn obtained reinforcements, once more assailed the wood and hamlet. At first he was repulsed, but the combined movement of General Wrede was arranged with such precision, that the Austro-Bavarians, moving on the right of the Prince Royal by the forest of Soulaines, in the direction of Chaumenil, marched immediately on Tremilly, to attack both Chaumenil and the left wing of the French army at the same time. It was at the

moment that the Marshal Duke of Ragusa was trying, by strong columns of cavalry and infantry, to establish his communication with Chaumenil by Morvilliers. The Field Marshal Lieutenant Count de Hardegg attacked his columns with vigour, and drove them back on Morvilliers. A division of the Schwartzenberg *hulans*, by a fortunate charge, seized a battery of six pieces of cannon, which the French were just moving to the support of the sixth corps. The junction of the Prince Royal and Count Wrede being now effected, Gibrie and Chaumenil were re-attacked and carried by superior numbers. Napoleon having learnt that the position of his left wing was thus assailed, lost no time in hastening thither with part of the artillery of his guard. He ordered the troops to re-take Chaumenil, under the protection of a well-directed fire, attaching great importance to the possession of this village; and then immediately repaired to the centre of the army, where his presence was equally needed. General Count de Wrede, therefore, being convinced that he must either force the batteries of the guard to withdraw, or take them, caused all the Austro-Bavarian divisions to advance. These troops fell directly on the batteries, put the cavalry to the route, broke the squares of infantry, and forced the artillerymen to retreat, after having taken from them several cannon and ammunition waggons. From this time Chaumenil continued in the possession of the Allies.

Nearly three hours were employed in manœuvres and successive attacks on this point, but it was in vain that Napoleon had, by his demonstration, threatened the right flank of the position, occupied by the allies. Field-Marshal Blucher was not to be dissuaded from the object, which he principally wished to attain. Seeing his right secure by the double success of the Prince Royal and Count de Wrede, he determined to carry Rothiere by main force, considering that to be the centre and key of the French army. It was in fact the decisive point; and upon the possession of it depended the success of the battle, which towards three o'clock became general. All the allied troops deployed in the plains of Rothiere and Brienne. General Sacken's infantry, advancing in echelon, assailed Rothiere, at the same time that, on the left, General Count Guilay filled the interval between the Aube and the troops disposed for attack, by advancing the third corps and opening its fire on Dienville.

The ardour of the allied troops was excited to enthusiasm by the presence of the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the Prince of Schwartzenberg. Taking a station between Trannes and Rothiere, on the very ground of action, they observed and followed the progress of the attacks, which were in some degree confused by a high wind, and a fall of snow that darkened all the air. The artillery and musketry sometimes actually ceased, from the impossibility of discern-

ing any object. The Russian batteries, although served with an evident superiority, left half the cannon behind, so great was the depth of snow upon the ground; and it was only by doubling the usual train, that the other half were removed. The resistance was always obstinate at Rothiere and Dienville, the left wing being only dislodged, not broken. About sunset, the French cavalry penetrated towards the centre, as far as the masses of Russian infantry, which it compelled to give way. At this critical moment, Field-Marshal Blucher made one of those bold movements which generally secure victory. He ordered his cavalry, which had been reinforced, to turn the left flank of the French, by a rapid movement, and attack them in the rear. At the same time, the infantry, commanded by General Sacken, received orders to assail the French on the right flank. These manœuvres, which darkness favoured, were executed with as much spirit as precision; and the French cavalry, surprised by the Russian dragoons, were charged, and driven to Brienne-le-Vieux, which the Russians entered, close upon the heels of the enemy. Napoleon's infantry, which formed the centre, being then uncovered, General Sacken pushed his attacks with vigour, and remained master of Rothiere. The battle appeared to be won. Napoleon himself for a moment feared the rout of his army, an event, which was inevitable if the allies had redoubled their charges on Brienne and Lesmont. The disaster at Leipzig

might have been repeated; for the bridge of Lesmont had not been re-constructed, and afforded only a narrow difficult passage.

But the first alarm was succeeded by returning confidence. Napoleon placed himself at the head of General Colbert's cavalry; and ordered a charge, which arrested the progress of the allies. Marshal Oudinot, Duke of Reggio, hastily arrived from Lesmont with two divisions of the national guard, and assumed the offensive. Strong columns of infantry, and batteries of flying artillery were directed against Rothiere. Napoleon thrice renewed the attack, at the head of his guards, with such vigour that he seized the church and several houses, while the Russian grenadiers occupied the rest of the village. Being thus at close quarters, both sides resorted to the bayonet. General Decons, who commanded the second division of the national guard, was severely wounded, and died soon afterwards. General Baste fell on the spot, pierced by balls; he was an officer of the navy, who renounced his rank of Vice-Admiral, that he might serve by land.

The efforts of the Russians, in front of the line, were the more animated from being directed by Marshal Blucher in person. This commander was among the soldiers, who were most exposed to the fire at the attack of Rothiere, encouraging the troops, when assailed in the village by the imperial guards. A cossack was killed at his side.

The Russian reserve now advanced, by command of the Emperor Alexander, and amidst these

vicissitudes, the battle was prolonged into the night. Towards ten o'clock the Prince of Wagram, when traversing the French line to visit the posts, found the two armies so near each other, that he several times took the posts of the allies for those of the French. The Adjutant-General Maussoin, one of his aides-de-camp, fell into the hands of the enemy, as did the General of Division, Forestier. At length, the whole village of Rothiere was ceded to the obstinate valour of the Russians; and General Sacken, who had three times been on the point of becoming a prisoner, made a bold charge on the right of the village, seized twenty pieces of cannon, and took five to six hundred prisoners, belonging to the guards. At midnight, Napoleon made his last attack on Rothiere, which the Russians repulsed, and continued in possession of the village; thus deciding the victory in favor of the allies.

But the right extremity of the French line maintained itself at Dienville, by almost miraculous efforts against the repeated attacks of the Austrian corps, under General Giulay; who, in his attempt to cross from the left bank of the Aube to the right, had several battalions destroyed. It was the last point of the French position, and by the bridge over the Aube, it ensured the most prompt communication with Troyes. Reiterated assaults had no effect on the resolution of General Gerard. It was not until midnight that he yielded the part of the village, which lies on the right bank, and

put himself in retreat on the other side of the river, after having destroyed the bridge, and abandoned to the Austrians two hundred and thirty prisoners.

Thus the victory, so long disputed by French valour, was complete on all points of the line. Buonaparte's army filed, at one o'clock in the morning, with its baggage, on the bridge of Lesmont. His rear-guard alone was posted in advance of Brienne, and did not commence its march until break of day, when it was followed by some parties of cossacks. It filed also towards Lesmont, while the sixth corps, by a lateral movement, covered the retreat, and took the direction of Ronay. The Marshal Duke of Ragusa there found a strong position; and Field-Marshal Blucher immediately made dispositions to attack both these rear-guards at the same time. He put in motion the three corps of the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, General de Wrede, and General Giulay. The Prince Royal marched on Brienne; General Wrede advanced on the right of his highness; and General Giulay along the Aube. A brilliant charge of the Prince on the cavalry, which covered the retreat near Saint-Christophe, was completely successful. The rear-guard, being driven from Brienne, gained Lesmont; but here general Giulay, supported by the Wurtemberg infantry, attacked it immediately; while General Count de Wrede equally assumed the offensive against the sixth corps, which occupied the heights of Ronay. The Marhal Duke of

Ragusa had destroyed the bridge; and there now lay before him a marsh, almost inundated by the overflowing of the Voire. According to the accounts of the peasantry, this almost impregnable position had been chosen by Napoleon himself, who had been there on the preceding day, and ordered preparations of a defensive nature.

Obstacles could not discourage the Bavarians. They persevered, though they always failed at the first onset, from the courageous opposition of the French; and ventured on ice, which was so thin that it frequently broke, letting them sink to the middle in water. It was impossible to proceed but upon the main roads, and when the troops came to action, the arms and ammunition were almost useless, from the humidity of the weather.

General Count de Wrede was determined to carry, by assault, a position which thus protected the retreat of the French. His troops, after repeated attempts, at length surmounted the greater part of the difficulties opposed to them; and seized a bridge over a rivulet, which flows through Ronay in two branches. Half the village was thus in their possession; but their progress was impeded by the second arm of the rivulet, the bridge over which was broken down. While thus situated, the French, who were stationed in force behind the Voire, as well as in the church and houses of Rouay, availed themselves of every aperture to fire upon their opponents. Towards

four o'clock the Austro-Bavarian cavalry found a place, which was fordable for horses, and crossed the Noire; but the 6th corps of the French had then retreated, and was safe. This fine defence, on the part of the Marshal Duke of Ragusa, retarded the pursuit of Napoleon's army twenty-four hours. Lesmont was carried by an Austro-Wurtemburg corps, but the French were then established on the right bank of the Aube, taking their direction on Troyes by Piney, with a view of rallying upon the Imperial guard and other divisions, forming the army of the Marshal Duke of Treviso.

Such was the battle of Brienne, or rather of Rothiere, in which Napoleon, for the first time, combated the Allies in person upon the territory of France.

The courage, which his troops displayed, their heroic efforts, the danger to which he exposed himself—all tend to prove the importance which he attached to victory in this first engagement. The Allies too were obliged to carry every village, height, or wood, by assault; and paid with their blood for every foot of ground. It is true that their ardour, their constancy, and numbers surmounted every obstacle.

Some villages, which during the battle had taken up arms against the Allies, had sentence of military execution passed upon them. This sad necessity, or more properly speaking, this rigorous proceeding is justified by the laws of war.

On the part of the Allies, nearly eighty-thousand men had been engaged ; and on that of Napoleon above sixty-thousand. If he had to regret the want of his veteran guard, it may be said on the other hand, that the corps of Colloredo, Wittgenstein, Kleist, and York took no part in the battle. The loss of the French was reckoned at from four to five thousand men killed and wounded, including a small number of prisoners. That of the Allies amounted to more than six thousand ; but they neither lost a prisoner, nor a cannon. On the contrary, they took seventy of the latter, and remained masters of the ground. Such, moreover, was the moral effect of this day, that nearly twenty thousand conscripts abandoned the colours of Napoleon during the retreat. The Prince of Schwartzenberg, who had caused the reinforcements to move with celerity and intelligence, received a sword from the Emperor Alexander upon the field of battle. General Count de Wrede, and the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg were decorated with the order of Saint George.

But the battle of Brienne would have been more important in its results, if the Allies had deduced from it all the fruits and advantages, which it appeared to offer.

Why did they not manœuvre to oppose the junction of the defeated army, with the veteran Imperial guard stationed at Troyes ? They would have encountered no insurmountable obstacle in

crossing the Aube at Dienville, and in marching straight on Piney, by which road the retreating columns were necessarily obliged to pass. Why too did they not make an attack on Troyes, by the road of Chaumont, to coincide with the one made upon Brienne? These omissions were attended with serious consequences.

The Grand Army, however, had gained a glorious victory; and the Monarchs might now expect, without presumption, that they would ere long prescribe the terms of peace to him, who had so often dictated it to them in their own capitals.

CHAPTER VI.

Distress of the French Army in its Retreat towards Troyes—Situation and Alarms of Paris—Hesitation of the Allies—They march on the Capital with Two distinct Armies—Napoleon determines to guard the Position of Troyes—He is assailed towards the Marne—Plan of Field Marshal Blucher—March of General York—He seizes Vitry and Chalons—The Marshal Duke of Tarentum falls back on Chateau-Thierry—Napoleon abandons Troyes and falls back on Nogent—The Allies enter Troyes—Opening of the Congress at Chatillon—Napoleon applies for a Suspension of Arms—The Allies propose to him the Signature of the Preliminaries of Peace—Policy of the Allied Courts—The Bourbons at length remembered.

Disorganized by the sensation of defeat, and still more reduced by desertion than by loss in battle, the French army retreated on Troyes in a most deplorable state. Every thing seemed against it. In the very bosom of France, and in the midst of fertile fields, where the granaries overflowed, the soldier wanted bread. His ration not being regularly delivered, he supported himself as it were, on roots and vegetables, during the sudden marches from Saint-Dizier to Brienne, and from Brienne to Troyes. His slender share of repose was less employed for the digestion of his repast than to recruit his strength, exhausted as it had been by *bivouacs* in deep mire, amidst the inclemency of winter.

When the army had passed the Aube, some hundreds of cossacks were seen in the neighbour-

hood of Piney. The very sight of these men, and their barbarous aspect, threw the recent levies into a sort of panic, which communicated itself to more experienced soldiers. The conscripts threw down their arms, disappeared in the woods, and regained their homes. It was thus that the army, more and more reduced every hour, now approached the ancient capital of Champagne.

At Troyes, as at Paris, it was at first believed that Napoleon had been victorious. A letter from the major-general, indeed, confirmed the report of a signal advantage. The resources of imposition are a *ruse-de-guerre*; and it is the less surprising that Napoleon should have used them, since his government depended upon keeping the people in the dark.

The surprise was extreme when, in the midst of these triumphant rumours, the inhabitants of Troyes saw the wreck of the French army arrive within their walls, and Napoleon on horseback, covered with snow and mud, almost without attendants, and having all the appearance of a fugitive. About five thousand men, of every description, entered Troyes in lamentable disorder. The rest filed without the city, and took a position.

The imperial guards marched on Arcis-sur-Aube; but after four-and-twenty hours of hesitation, the issue of events calling them back to Troyes, they formed a junction there with the defeated army. This corps, which consisted of both horse and foot, was an incomparable body of men,

and formed a striking contrast to the rest of the army, in whose discontent it soon took a part. Patience and endurance were at an end. Bitter complaints and cries of despair escaped the troops, who no longer listened to their commanders, and seemed to be upon the point of mutiny.

Nevertheless, the concentration of these miserable men took place in the neighbourhood of Troyes, with the exception of the sixth corps, which, after having passed the Aube at Ronay, moved on Arcis, where the Marshal Duke of Ragusa took a position. The whole army, collected at Troyes, amounted to forty-three thousand men, of whom fifteen to twenty thousand were veteran troops.

The greatest anxiety prevailed at Paris, where contradictory reports were in circulation, according to the interest of those who propagated them. The partizans of Buonaparte could talk of nothing but his prodigies; while his enemies perceived nothing but calamity attendant on his measures, and invoked the catastrophe which would at length put an end to his frightful tyranny. The police was busy, as usual, in his support. Its journals gave splendid accounts of his marches and manœuvres, as well as of numbers still continually flocking to the standard, which, according to their details, had been so often reinforced before. Almost every day, corps were reviewed at the Tuileries, previous to their junction with the army. King Joseph, who had suc-

cessively occupied two thrones, both of which he had lost, was the grand inspector, having the rank of lieutenant-general to the Emperor his brother. According to the official statements, these corps amounted to eighteen thousand men; but it was asserted that regiments frequently marched out of the city at one gate and into it at another, that they might pass a second and third time in review; thus imitating the triumphal marches of a theatre.

Public curiosity was wound up to a pitch of great impatience, when at length the bulletin arrived, and described the battle of Brienne to the credulous French as an engagement of the rear-guard, but which had afforded their army an opportunity of achieving one of the most brilliant exploits. It stated that the contest had ceased at night after a brisk cannonade; that the army had continued its manœuvres of concentration without impediment; and that its object had been completely effected.

The Parisians turned their eyes towards the seat of war, and the course of the Aube and Marne, endeavouring to divine the movements and evolutions of the army, as far as it was possible to follow them through such a tissue of tergiversation and falsehood. The result was that the Corsican Cæsar had evidently fallen back; and that, instead of having taken prisoners and cannon, as had been so impudently stated, he had undergone a series of checks, which dissipated the illusions and dreams of his admirers.

His inconsiderate movement on Saint Dizier, and his defeat at Brienne, had destroyed the resources which had escaped the disasters of Spain, Russia and Germany; but it was the destiny of Buonaparte that his enemies should be kinder to him than Fortune.

A little boldness, after the battle of Brienne, would have brought the allies to Paris in six or seven days. In fact, they were uncertain whether Napoleon had retired on Chalons or Troyes; and the hesitation, arising from this doubt, deprived them of the advantages which might have been deduced from the victory. Too much deliberation and a degree of timidity, stopped their progress. They might have attacked the discomfitted army; and every military man expected that they would do so. It was the universal opinion that if Napoleon hazarded a second battle, he would be lost; and that he could only save himself by a prompt retreat.

Nothing excited greater astonishment, among men of intelligence, than the intention, which Buonaparte manifested, of remaining and keeping possession of Troyes, at a moment when his enemies, as numerous as formidable, might attack his flanks, gain several days' march upon him, arrive suddenly at Paris, and thus obtain the object of the war.

The allied monarchs had decided that they would march towards this capital in two grand corps; the one following the course of the Seine

and Yonne, by the roads of Troyes and Sennes; the other gaining the Marne by Chalons, Chateau-Thierry, and Meaux. This plan seemed to afford the double advantage of securing subsistence to the allies, in a country which they conceived to be drained of provisions, and placing Napoleon between two offensive armies, one of which might hold him in check, while the other, by its sudden appearance at the gates of the metropolis, would cause every idea of defence to be abandoned, and thus prevent the destruction of the city.

But this system of separation was liable to produce serious inconveniences, when opposed to an enemy as active as perfidious, and attended with dangers which, to the misfortune of human nature, the allies actually experienced. They could not, indeed, have been avoided but by a celerity incompatible with the cautious circumspection of the combined powers.

The first effect then, of this new plan was to separate the army of Silesia from that of the grand army; while Blucher took the direction of Fere-Champenoise towards the Marne, the Prince of Schwartzenberg marched on Troyes by Vandœuvre. Troyes was, therefore, seriously threatened by a victorious army. There were only a few works, hastily constructed, and batteries, placed at the gates, which could protect it; so that a battle would probably seal its fate. What a situation for the ancient capital of Champagne, which being, like Brienne, almost entirely built of wood, could

not for a moment become the theatre of war, without a risk of being consumed!

Every account announced the approach of the allies in strong columns. It is said that Napoleon sent for the Mayor of Troyes, and informed him that the law of necessity might, perhaps, compel him to burn the suburbs, for the purpose of covering the movements of the army; which made it necessary that the most valuable effects should be removed. "Sire," answered the Mayor, "if the safety of France depends upon burning this city, you may destroy it; but God will one day pass sentence on our actions." At these words Napoleon turned his back, and passed into another apartment, leaving the magistrate in a cruel state of uncertainty as to the fate of his fellow-citizens.

Meanwhile, the army occupied all the positions in the vicinity of the place, which were capable of being defended; particularly the bridges of Guillotiere over the Barce, two leagues in advance of Troyes. Napoleon openly manifested his intention of maintaining the place, and announced reinforcements of thirty to forty thousand men, who were on their way from Britanny, Normandy, and the army of Spain. But travellers contradicted these assertions, having seen no troops upon the road; and hence it was inferred that these pretended reinforcements were a fiction, invented solely for the purpose of inspiring confidence and courage.

Independent of the position at Guillotiere, the army occupied that of Maisons-Blanches, also two

leagues from Troyes, but on the Burgundy road. An Austrian division, commanded by the Prince of Lichtenstein, having advanced in this direction, was vigorously repulsed; and Marshal Mortier, Duke of Treviso, immediately pushed his advanced guard over the bridge to the village of Eteroy. The Prince of Schwartzenberg ordered Count Coloredo to march the division of Bianchi on Eteroy. The general executed this order with equal intelligence and bravery. The bridge was re-taken, and forty grenadiers of the guard were made prisoners by the allies.

On the 4th at night, the Emperor of Russia's head-quarters were fixed at Lusigny, near Vandœuvre, where the Russian guards and a great part of the hostile army were stationed. The allied monarchs were far from imagining that Napoleon would defend Troyes; but supposed the French army to be in full retreat, and intended to enter that city on the same evening. The heads of the columns marched on the bridges of Guillotiere; and Count Coloredo having repaired to the advanced guard, for the purpose of reconnoitring the position of the French upon the Barce, a brisk combat took place towards the heights beyond the bridges, upon which occasion the Austrian general received a musket-ball in his thigh. General Nostiz immediately assumed the command; but the attack had already failed. After several skirmishes, five or six French dragoons fell into the hands of the allies. They were conducted to the Prince of

Schwartzenberg, and informed his Highness that Napoleon was at Troyes, intending to maintain that place. The allies, therefore, immediately changed their dispositions. On the following day, viz. the 5th, the French army expected a general battle, and Napoleon was in fact about to pass the Barce, with the intention of repulsing the allies, when, to his great surprise, he received intimation that they were retrograding on Vandœuvre. This was a consequence of the general plan which they had adopted, either to give battle on more favourable ground, such as Bar-sur-Aube, or Chaumont; or to avoid a general engagement till they had completed their combinations, the object of which was to ruin their adversary, and reduce him to despair.

In concentrating, the allied army held the following positions. The Wurtemberg corps occupied Montieramy, Montreuil, and Lusigny. The Prince of Lichtenstein's corps established itself at Saint-Pierre, on the left; communicating with that of Wurtemberg by the division of Count Coloredo. On the right was stationed the corps of General Count Giulay; while Count de Wrede was cantoned at Vandœuvre with the guards and reserve. Finally, Count Wittgenstein occupied a position on the Melda, covered, on the side of Mery, by General Count Pahlen.

Resolved, nevertheless, to expel Buonaparte from Troyes, the Allies unceasingly pushed strong corps on the roads of Arcis, Bar-sur-Aube, Bar.

sur-Seine, Saint-Florentin, and Sens; to intercept the communication of the French army with Paris. But Napoleon, braving all these demonstrations, would not listen to such a word as retreat; and several houses, situated on the road to Arcis, were burnt by his order, to prevent the passage of the Allies over the Seine. At length this extraordinary man, whom force alone, but prudence never could induce to retreat, found himself compelled to abandon the ancient capital of Champagne without a battle. It was to the diversion of the Silesian army on the Marne, that the Allies were indebted for the conquest of Troyes.

This diversion had commenced by the offensive movement of General York's corps. Having re-taken Saint-Dizier he had fortified the place, as being situated on the military road, and had established a line of communication between Joinville, Vaucouleurs, and Vaid; after which he had proceeded to Vitry-sur-Marne, and attacked it on the 1st of February. At first, he was repulsed by General Montmarie and the inhabitants, but had returned in great force, thrown shells into the place, and at length taken it. He immediately moved on Chalons, to which town the eleventh corps of the French army had fallen back, under the command of the Marshal Duke of Tarentum, as well as the divisions of Generals Sebastiani, and Arrighi.

Being informed that the Prussians were approaching, the Marshal opposed to them on the 3d of February, eight thousand men, preceded by

the cavalry of Generals Sebastiani and Excelmans; but the Prussians, who were superior in number, manœuvred to turn this detachment. They overtook the rear-guard, attacked it advantageously between Chalons and Vitry, obtained three cannon as well as some prisoners, and pursued it to the gates of Chalons. General York immediately sent an officer to summon the place, and on receiving a refusal from the French commander, caused the suburbs, on the side of Vitry, to be seized; and then threw shells into the town, by which it was set on fire in four quarters. A brisk discharge of musketry took place on both sides, and Chalons was upon the point of experiencing the horrors of pillage and fire. A deputation of the magistrates, however, was authorized by the Duke of Tarentum to wait upon General York, and sue for a suspension of hostilities. This the general refused, not chusing to treat with any but military commanders. The marshal himself then entered into negociation, and it was agreed that the French troops should evacuate the town, leaving the magazines, provisions, and every thing else in the state they were, at the time of agreement.

The eleventh corps were pledged for the scrupulous observance of these conditions; but in spite of representations on the part of the inhabitants, the Duke of Tarentum destroyed the stone-bridge over the Marne, the better to insure his retreat. He effected it on the 6th of by the left

bank of that river, having in his train, a park of nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, partly drawn by the horses of the peasantry. General York hastened to pass the Marne at another point, and pursue the French on the road to Paris. The intelligence of the success at Brienne, and the approach of other corps from the army of Silesia, inspired him with additional ardour. He marched rapidly on Chateau-Thierry, while General Sacken took the direction of Sezanne-sur-Montmirail, thus both advancing towards the capital, and forming, as it were, the two advanced guards of the Silesian army. The commander in chief, Blucher, removed his head quarters to Sandron, and took the direction of Vertus, where he found himself in communication with all the corps of his army. That of General Kleist arrived from Saint-Dizier; and General Kapsiewitz, with one of the principal divisions of Langeron's corps, arrived likewise from the Marne. The Prince of Cobourg's corps had relieved that of Langeron, and undertaken the blockade of the strong places, left in the rear of the Prussian army. The Field-Marshal's plan consisted in collecting all the Russian and Prussian troops by Mayence, the Meuse, the Moselle, and the Aisne, for the purpose of marching with this formidable army in *echelon* directly on Paris.

The Marshal Duke of Tarentum, who alone covered the roads of Chateau Thierry and Meaux

with the wreck of an army, could be no obstacle to the progress of the Silesian corps. The danger was imminent, and Napoleon found himself impeded by the Marne and Yonne. The Hetman Platoff having appeared with his cossacks, at the gates of Sens, stupefaction and horror overpowered all who were upon the roads in the neighbourhood of Paris. Napoleon, however, could not even yet resolve to abandon the capital of Champagne to the Allies. His advanced posts were always posted towards the bridges of Giullotiere, and a general battle was expected between Troyes and Vandœuvre.

Nevertheless, on the 6th of February, after many orders for departure, revoked almost as soon as issued, Napoleon, who had determined to remain at Troyes, received a courier from his brother Joseph, which at once caused him to change his resolution. This stage-king explained to Buonaparte the impossibility of maintaining himself on the Marne, and the alarm which pervaded Paris, when the entry of the Allies seemed inevitable, and actually wished by the inhabitants. Truth had forced its way to the very centre of the metropolis. The particulars of the battle of Brienne were become public. The superiority of the enemy, who was more formidable from numbers than audacity, the defeat of the French army, its miserably reduced state—all had now transpired, and Paris was only occupied with her own fate. Works were begun for the purpose of guarding the ap-

proaches ; and the barriers were palisaded from fear of a surprise, or *coup-de-main.* Passy, Montmartre, and the adjoining heights were fixed upon to serve as defensive positions. Towers were also made to Saint-Denis, and Aubervilliers ; and the national guard, in full activity of service, assumed a most military appearance. An immense fabrication of pikes was announced, for the purpose of arming the country people ; but the prospect of a local defence alarmed every one.

Such was the situation of the metropolis, when Napoleon, with feelings of deep mortification, a downcast mien, and gloomy eye, ordered Troyes to be abandoned, and some thousands of his men to advance on Lusigny, that they might conceal his retreat. This happened at the moment of a plan having been formed by the Allies to attack the whole French line on the following day ; and the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg had already pushed forward a reconnoitring party, while General Stockmayer moved by Clercy with an advanced guard. But the French army abandoning its position at Courtenange, during the night, effected its retreat towards Nogent-sur-Seine, leaving at the gates of Troyes only a feeble detachment, which fell into the hands of the Prince Royal's cavalry. On the preceding day, his royal highness had turned the position of Giullotiere, not far from Ruvigny; and, taking possession of Laubrecelles on his left, found himself ready to commence the general attack, when he received the first intelli-

gence of Troyes being evacuated. He immediately placed himself at the head of his troops, and appeared before the gates of the city, four hours after the departure of Napoleon. The inhabitants now began to revive; trusting that Troyes would not become a prey to the flames, nor witness the shock of the two contending armies. The fate of Brienne too much justified this dreadful apprehension.—The Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, finding no resistance, broke down the palisades, entered the city at full speed, and took possession of it without a single magistrate presenting himself, Napoleon having given no intimation, even to the mayor, that he should leave the city. The principal notables, however, assembled in haste, and presented the keys to the prince, who immediately sent them to the generalissimo by colonel Mumhingen; then, re-mounting his horse, he vigorously pursued the rear-guard of the French, at the head of his light dragoons, upon the road to Paris, overtook the stragglers, and made some prisoners.

At the same time, the main body of the Wurtemberg army defiled through the city, advanced on the road to Sens, and fixed its head-quarters at Fonvanes, Liebault, Heuville, and Villemont.—The allied troops, both horse and foot, continued their march towards Paris, and in less than twelve hours more than a hundred thousand men took a position beyond Troyes; pushing their advanced guards in all directions. General Count de Wrede

pursued the French as far as Granges, on the road to Nogent.

It was thus that the Allies obtained possession of a city, which formerly contained forty thousand souls, several large manufactories, and many other buildings, used by various artisans. The disastrous administration of Napoleon had reduced its population to twenty thousand inhabitants; but the great roads from various parts of France, which meet at Troyes, its resources, and the fertility of its soil, rendered its occupation of the highest importance, particularly with respect to the subsistence of the armies.

The military government of the city was conferred upon Prince Hohenlohe-Bartestein, governor-general of the departments of the Aube, the Yonne, the Higher Marne, and the Cote-d'Or.—The members of the prefecture received the prince's orders to provide subsistence, in conformity to the requisitions which would be made by the intendant general of the allied armies. These requisitions were incessant, and Troyes became an absolute granary to the troops of the European league.

But it was here that the indecision of the allied army became still more manifest. Napoleon, the better to disguise his retreat, had put his army in motion during the night, in most severe weather, and upon roads drenched with rain.—The fatigue of the troops, during this painful march, was quite overwhelming; the conscripts continued

to desert; and such, in short, was the general feeling of depression that, in the morning, the roads and ditches between Troyes and Mery, were covered and filled with musquets and accoutrements. The veteran imperial guard itself manifested its disgust. "We should have been lost," observed the most enlightened of the soldiery, "if the army had remained at Troyes four-and-twenty hours longer, for the enemy would have turned and annihilated us. And who can say that such will not still be the case? What can thirty to thirty-five thousand men, discouraged by defeat, effect against one hundred and fifty thousand, animated by success, and a thirst for revenge? Since leaving Moscow, the French army has known nothing but disasters and destruction. Alas! what will become of France, over-run as she is by torrents of foes?"—In fact, if our enemies suspended their progress for a moment, it was the result of their own cautious combinations.

It is true that nothing but motives of policy, unknown to us, can account for the inconceivable slowness of the Allies, who, after having lost eight days before Troyes, left Napoleon at liberty to effect his retreat, without availing themselves of the advantage afforded by numerical superiority, as well as the ascendancy always attendant on victory; and contented themselves with pushing forward a few advanced guards, more for the sake of appearance than to effect any object.

But the whole career of Buonaparte has been

marked by attempts of a description so audacious, that even when defeated, he still inspired his enemies with a degree of alarm, and he always turned their hesitation to his own advantage. It was thus when the Allies reached the Rhine, that though fully prepared for the invasion, they halted as if astonished and stopped by the novelty of the enterprize ; as if, with their means of insuring success, they still thought themselves not sufficiently strong. Napoleon was lost, if, after the battle of Leipzig, the Allies had collected all their disposable force, organized reserves without delay to support the main army, and penetrated boldly into the heart of France. He was then discouraged because he was without resources, without plan, without calculation. He had not even had time to secure his treasure and protect the elements of his dynasty. He asked of Fortune a discontinuance of hostilities, and she granted it ; or rather his enemies did so. In like manner, after the battle of Brienne, he wished for a pause of a fortnight ; and his enemies, as it were, met his views. The fact is that the Austrian cabinet wanted only peace, without the overthrow of Napoleon ; and Alexander, from deference towards his brother Emperor, coincided in this pacific system. The powerful Czar of the Russias displayed the most noble frankness in every transaction; and, like the Emperor of Austria, flattered himself that Napoleon would yield to the will of the universe, and bow to the law of necessity. Russia and England displayed no wish

but for a peace conformable to the general interest of Europe. The conferences at Chatillon-sur-Seine had been opened on the 4th of February, and a circuit of four leagues round that place had been declared neutral. At the request of Russia, Lord Castlereagh, principal secretary of state for foreign affairs to his Britannic Majesty, arrived there. His Lordship's very name, his character as to amenity of manners, and moderation of sentiment, caused a general hope that the wish for peace would soon be realized throughout Europe. Nothing, indeed, seemed impracticable with regard to this object, if a wise policy were supported by arms, and beneficent intentions.

These pacific dispositions had not escaped the observation of the French ruler; but though he was fully aware of the danger attendant on his position, which placed him in the situation of either signing an ignominious peace, or seeing the allied armies advance to the gates of his capital, he thought of preventing the hostile occupation of the latter, by summoning deception to his aid. He sent instructions, therefore, to his plenipotentiary at Chatillon, the object of which was to propose an armistice, founded upon the same basis, which the Allies had deemed necessary towards the establishment of a general peace. He offered to give up all the fortified places in the countries, which France ceded, on condition that military operations were entirely suspended.

This signal of distress was, however, in reality

only a feint to arrest the progress of the Allies, thereby affording time to collect the reinforcements drawn from the armies of Spain; for Napoleon was determined to sacrifice the south, in order to protect the centre. A division of the army, which covered Bayonne and Bourdeaux, had already reached Provins, under the command of General Leval. Other divisions were following, and the national guards of Orleans, Normandy, and Britanny were in motion under the orders of General Pajal.

The proposition, therefore, of an immediate armistice, communicated by the French envoy to the Congress, was an absolute trap; and though the Allies did not blindly fall into it, they could not altogether avoid it. Accordingly, as the experience of many years had proved that, in negotiating with Buonaparte, appearances were to be carefully distinguished from intentions, they substituted for the proposition of an armistice, that of signing the preliminaries of peace upon the spot, with a condition that the principal places, now invested by the Allies, should be resigned by Napoleon as pledges for the sincerity of his intentions, viz. Antwerp, Wesel, Mayence, Strasburg, and Besançon. The signature of these preliminaries would have secured to France, at this terrible crisis, all the advantages of an armistice, without exposing the Allies to any of the dangers attendant on a suspension of arms. But neither the preliminaries, nor the armistice were the object which Buonaparte had in view. His only aim was

to suspend the progress of the Allies by embarrassing their policy, and to avail himself of the advantage afforded by the union, which, contrary to all expectation, he had formed with an Austrian princess. He naturally and properly supposed how painful the co-operation of his august father-in-law must be against an empire, the throne of which was occupied by the archduchess, his daughter. Was it not in reality this singular circumstance which caused the indecision of the Allies, before alluded to, and made them hesitate as to crushing a man, who was equally the foe of monarchs and of subjects? The delay, however, afforded them time to think of the legitimate sovereign of France, and the unfortunate members of his house, whose goodness of heart always formed their characteristic trait—the august offspring of Henry the Fourth, who, by a fatal revolution and too successful usurpation, had been for above twenty years banished from the cradle of their greatness, and the throne of their ancestors.

It was at Vesoul, about the beginning of January, that the Allied Sovereigns first became acquainted with the real sentiments of the French nation; the hatred borne towards the universal oppressor, who occupied the throne of Saint Louis; the exhaustion of his resources in every respect, and the dangers which would infallibly result to Europe if this conqueror, when driven within his own limits, should, by his impositions, arm the

nation in his favor. It was at Vesoul that the monarch, struck by these important considerations, recollected that a hospitable island still protected the legitimate sovereign of France. But let it be frankly confessed, that at this first dawning of the restoration, the Bourbons were only instruments of policy. It was at a later period that Providence caused them to appear in full lustre, and execute its great designs.

CHAPTER VII.

Determination of England with regard to the Bourbons—Three Princes of the Royal Family embark for different points of the Continent—The allied monarchs enter Troyes—Conversation between the Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg and the Marquis de Widranges, respecting the intention of the Allies—A deputation of the principal royalists, from Troyes, apply for the re-establishment of the legitimate dynasty—Answer of the Emperor Alexander—State of the French army on its arrival at Nogent—Situation of Paris, at the time that the Allies were approaching it—All appears to be lost—Napoleon suddenly assumes the offensive towards the Marne—Defeat of the Russian rear-guard at Champeaubert—Battle of Montmirail and defeat of General Sacken's corps—Pursuit of the Russians and Prussians to Chateau-Thierry—This place is sacked—The enemy takes refuge behind the Marne—March of Field-Marshal Blucher upon Montmirail—Battle of Vauchamp, or Janvilliers—Retreat of Marshal Blucher on Chalone.

It has been mentioned that the allied Sovereigns at length remembered the august exiles, who were groaning, not for their own misfortunes, but those of their native country. The British Cabinet had been principally instrumental in forming the coalition, by which Europe was to be saved; and perceived no prospect of termination to the mournful consequences of the French revolution, but by re-establishing the legitimate monarch upon the throne, and re-placing France in the situation, which she held before the disturbances of 1789. A still greater incitement to the restoration was the fact that, during the nine centuries which had elapsed under the sway of the Bourbons, history had only pointed out one tyrant among the forty-three kings of that illustrious house. *The ancient*

family, and the ancient limits! Such was the system adopted by the allies as most tending to the general welfare of Europe; and their success was, therefore, destined to be the triumph of civilization over the system of plunder and destruction, adopted by France. Any other project could only have supplied palliatives, which, by making the benefits of peace more remote, would have prolonged the calamities of the universe; for how could peace be compatible with the desolating principles of the revolution, of which Buonaparte was the heir? Other cabinets, for instance those of Russia and Prussia, agreed in this respect with the statesmen of England; but the court of Vienna could not yet adopt similar sentiments. Placed between the great inrerests of Europe, and those of its alliance with Napoleon, the house of Austria found itself in a most embarrassing situation: but it relied upon the treaties, by which the confederated powers were bound to each other, and which did not embrace for their object any design of changing the government of France by force of arms. The interest and will of every nation ought, in fact, to be alone consulted on such an occasion. If, therefore, Buonaparte would not adhere to the basis of a peace, which was become indispensible for the purpose of checking his mad ambition; and further, if the French nation manifested a wish to escape from his own yoke, and re-establish the legitimate throne, nothing then remained, in order to promote general happiness, but the restoration

of the Bourbons. These principles were discussed and adopted in the council of the confederated monarchs; and the British government forthwith favoured the departure of the Princes, who belonged to the Royal Family of France, for different parts of the Continent, without, however, promising any actual and open assistance; this determination being subservient to the wish which might be manifested by the French. Accordingly, the Duke d'Angouleme set sail for the Pyrenees, of which the French part had called for the blood of Henry the Fourth. The Duke de Berry immediately repaired to the isle of Jersey, that he might be at hand to forward the ardent desire of the Royalists in Brittany, Normandy, and La Vendée. Monsieur the Count d'Artois landed, on the 2d February, at Catwich in Holland, and his Royal Highness, after resting two days at the Hague, directed his course towards the head-quarters of the allies, by Dusseldorf and Switzerland.

But while enquiries were made respecting the Bourbons, in every quarter, the idea of their return created such a degree of alarm in the mind of Buonaparte, that he adopted the policy of having apparently forgotten them, and of preserving a sullen silence on the subject; continuing, by every argument and subterfuge, to make the French believe that the only object of the allies, in entering the empire, was to plunder and dismember it.

Under these circumstances the three great potentates, who headed the coalition, entered Troyes. Their presence could not fail to re-ani-

mate the hopes of those, who were faithful partisans of the Bourbons. One of these was the Marquis de Widranges, a *ci-devant* nobleman of Lorraine, who now wished that Troyes should have the honor of being the first city to avow its genuine loyalty. He was seconded by M. de Gouault, a Chevalier of the order of Saint Louis, and a brave honourable officer, who had served in Germany under the command of the Duke d'Enghien. Inspired with this noble idea, the Marquis de Widranges introduced himself to the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, one of the heroes of the coalition; and in a preliminary conversation, besought his Royal Highness to make him acquainted with the intentions of the allies as to the fate of France. The Prince Royal evaded the question with all the forms of politeness; but the Marquis having, by degrees, inspired a greater degree of confidence, his Highness spoke in the following terms: "Since we entered France, we have only found inconsiderable places on the route, the inhabitants of which dare not avow any political opinion, and seem as it were, to resemble the sheep, which we demanded of them. Could the allied monarchs decide any thing with regard to Napoleon, until they had measured themselves with him upon French ground? That would have been impolitic. It was absolutely requisite to meet such a foe face to face; and by the battle of Brienne, the object we had in view was accomplished. The allied powers have adopted one principle, from which it

is their resolution not to depart. This is to abstain from any primary interference as to the choice of a French Sovereign. But Troyes is a large and populous city. Can it not avow its wish? Can you not effect this by your influence, and make the sentiments of the place known to the Emperor of Russia, a monarch of admirable frankness, and whose anxiety for the welfare of Europe is a sort of religion?" The Marquis answered that he himself dared not alone undertake to convey the sentiments of Troyes: but that he would assemble some distinguished friends, whose example would have great weight towards effecting a general determination. He then added; "But is it not to be feared that the interest of the Archduchess Maria Louisa will be detrimental to the cause of the Bourbons, in the eyes of the Emperor of Austria?"—"No," replied the Hereditary Prince, "the Emperor of Austria would, if necessary, sacrifice his dearest affections, for the purpose of securing to Europe a desirable peace; and if the Empress Maria Louisa should present herself at our advanced posts, she would be re-conducted with honor to the capital of her august father. Am not I myself in a situation nearly similar? Did not my sister, who is allied to all the crowned heads in Europe, give her hand to Jerome Buonaparte, when he became King of Westphalia?—What of that?—Should my sister return to Germany, she will be again a Princess of Wurtemberg. It is time that every thing was put in order."

This confidential dialogue strengthened the

disposition of the marquis, and his friends; and they soon afterwards learnt, from the Count de Rochechouart and Colonel Rapatel, who were attached to the staff of the Emperor Alexander, that the Dukes of Angouleme and Berry had landed on the continent. "It is time to speak out," added the Count de Rochechouart. In various towns and castles the Chevaliers of Saint Louis have resumed their cross, and the people in several cantons have mounted the white cockade."

The Marquis de Widranges and his friends were electrified; and he, as well as M. Gouault suspended from their button-holes that mark of distinction dear to the French, the cross of St. Louis. Their zeal too inspired an address to the Emperor of Russia, in the name of the Troyes Royalists. It was drawn up, and covered with signatures in a few moments. The marquis then obtained, through the intercession of Count Barclay de Tolly, an audience of the Czar at eleven on the 11th of February, and presented the address, at the head of a deputation which consisted of M. Gouault, M. de Richemont, M. de Montaigne, M. Mangin de Salabert, M. Guelon, M. Delacour-Bursau, Dr. Picard, and M. Jaquet.

The marquis, having been appointed to speak on the occasion, expressed himself in the following terms; "Sire, we, the organs of the honest population of Troyes, lay at the feet of your imperial majesty the homage of your profound respect, and humbly implore you to accord in our wish of seeing

the illustrious Bourbons re-established on the throne of France."

"Gentlemen," replied the Emperor with great condescension, "I see you with pleasure, and give you credit for the zeal you express, though I think it somewhat premature. I am not almighty, and the chances of war are uncertain. I should be sorry to see such brave men as yourselves sacrificed. We are not come to introduce a king; but merely to ascertain the intentions of France. It is for her to decide upon this point, but far from our wish to do so; and it is of importance for it not to be thought that public opinion is influenced by the presence of our armies."

The chief of the deputation then took the liberty of representing to the Czar that France would never dare to make a declaration in favor of her legitimate sovereign, so completely was she *under the knife.** "Not a human being loves Buonaparte," added he, "but all Frenchmen dread him; and does not danger ensue to crowned potentates in general, when a nation is sanctioned in changing a dynasty at pleasure, as France did by accepting Napoleon?" "Never," exclaimed the marquis with a degree of vehemence, tempered by respect, "never will Europe enjoy tranquillity, while Buonaparte possesses authority over France."

"For that very reason," answered the Emperor, "he must be met in arms."—Then, turning

* *Sous le couteau*--his own expression.

to the different gentlemen of the deputation, he addressed them most graciously, putting questions as to the different institutions at Troyes, particularly the hospitals ; and finally bade them farewell with an air of benevolence, which captivated every heart.

The above details are taken from communications, confidentially made to the author by the Marquis de Widranges himself. He, as well as the other royalists, placed entire reliance on the powerful Emperor of Russia; and far from being discouraged by the sage precautions, which a politic foresight dictated, they saw a more consolatory prospect opening to their unfortunate country.

They learnt, the same day, from Count de Rochechouart that Monsieur, the Count d'Artois, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, had the preceding night arrived at Basle. The Marquis de Widranges was deputed to wait upon his royal highness, and immediately took his departure with a copy of the address, which had been presented to the Allied Sovereigns. As he passed through Dijon, Langrea, and Vesoul, he assembled those who were faithful to the Bourbons, and announced to them that the Usurper was pursued by victorious armies to his last intrenchments.

After having been forced to abandon Troyes, Napoleon had only been able to reach Nogent-sur-Seine by a retrograde march of two days, which had exhausted and depressed his troops. Continued rains having more and more impaired the

roads, the soldiers had undergone an increase of fatigue, which the raw levies were incapable of sustaining, and despair was at its height. It is, moreover, well known that the least retreating movement has a moral influence on the French, and discourages them. No precautions had been taken to secure subsistence in a country that was drained of supplies; and these two days of fatigue cost the army a great number of men, who, having strayed into the villages and farms, were principally taken by the enemy's squadrons. Under such gloomy auspices, Napoleon established himself at Nogent, which is twenty-three leagues from the capital. The army took its position upon a plain in front of the town, the approaches to which were protected by a brook, and some marshy spots capable of defence. A few reinforcements also came, which repaired, in some degree, the void occasioned by his losses. It was also known that twelve thousand veterans, detached from the armies of Spain would very soon arrive, and that other troops were on their march. But it was in vain that Napoleon endeavoured to repair the disorder produced by his retreat.

Paris at this time exhibited the mournful and gloomy spectacle of a city, fixed upon to serve as the refuge of a beaten army. The Parisians saw the remains of that mighty phalanx, which had constituted the glory of France, expiring in numbers within their walls. They saw conscripts, and old soldiers, pale, disfigured, and sinking under dis-

tress; the former were trained in the streets, and the latter held in one hand the weapon, with which they had defended their country, while they implored charity with the other. They saw unfortunate victims dragged from their homes before they had attained manhood; and conducted, with their rural habits to the field of battle, there to face the fire of the enemy in the most dangerous situations. The Parisians likewise saw the Seine covered with vessels, which contained the wounded and dying. They saw the avenues and quays encumbered with carriages, into which were crowded poor mutilated soldiers, some having lost an arm, others a leg—nay, among them were unfortunate men, whose wounds had not even been dressed, and who implored the passers-by to end their existence.

The consternation was universal; and every one's thoughts were now directed to his own safety, and the rescue of his property. Amidst the silence of night, the repeated strokes of pick-axes and hammers were heard; the inhabitants being employed in concealing their gold, silver, and valuable effects in the walls, cellars, and secret places. The opulent families took refuge in Normandy or Britanny, where a great portion of the wealth, brought from the capital, was deposited; but this continued emigration of the families, which were in easy circumstances, did not, in any degree, diminish the population; for the vacancy was supplied immediately by numerous fugitives from the

invaded provinces. "If Napoleon retires within our walls," said the citizens, "and disputes with the allies the possession of the place, Paris is lost —its destruction inevitable. Heaven avert so dreadful a calamity, and grant that the enemy, by out-marching our oppressor, may leave him no retreat but the Loire!" Had such wishes been realised, the evils of war would have been prolonged, by its theatre being changed; but the Parisians could not consider any event as salutary to France, unless the capital was secure from immediate danger.

Courage and confidence now abandoned even the ministers and minions of power; for after having flattered themselves that Napoleon would maintain his position at Troyes, and obtain an armistice, they found their hopes defeated in both respects. In fact what was there to prevent the approach of the Silesian army upon Paris? It was advancing by the roads of the Marne, while Napoleon was still at Nogent-sur-Seine, perhaps in battle with the grand allied army. Such were the apprehensions of the courtiers; but Buonaparte was just at this time otherwise employed than in fighting; for he was striving to restore, if possible, the subordination of his men; who, being deprived of every thing, had resorted to pillage. The French peasantry fled from the French soldiery, and all the horrors of war spread through the finest provinces of the empire; so that the inhabitants soon began to feel who were their real enemies. Napoleon

thought that he should be able to suppress these ravages by the following order of the day, which was issued at Nogent on the 8th February, but only published in the camp, that the knowledge of it might not reach the public.

"The Emperor testifies his dissatisfaction at the excesses committed by the army. These excesses, which are culpable under all circumstances, become highly criminal when thus perpetrated on our own territory. The commanders of corps, and generals are hereby informed that they are responsible for all disorders. The inhabitants are flying in every direction; and the army, which ought to defend the country, is become its scourge. The men, attached to the train of artillery and equipage, are described as having been most prominent in thus acting contrary to their duty. The commanders of these corps are to take decisive measures for the suppression of such proceedings."

The prime authors of these disorders had, it seems, forgotten that it was he himself, who, by now allowing his troops neither pay nor subsistence, and who, by formerly wishing to gain their attachment during his destructive invasion, had taught them to taste the sweets of licentiousness and insubordination. It was he, therefore, who now by just retaliation reaped the bitter fruits of his odious policy.

On his arrival at Nogent-sur-Seine, Napoleon received several couriers from the Marshal Duke of Tarentum, stating that the Russians and Prus-

sians were advancing in force ; that they menaced Chateau-Thierry, Ferte-sous-Jouarre, and Meaux ; that they were masters of the whole course of the Marne, and that Paris itself would be lost, unless an imposing force was immediately sent to this line of operations. In fact, Field-Marshal Blucher was manœuvring in this direction, according to his new plan. After maintaining several contests with the Prussian corps of General York, between Epernay and Chateau-Thierry, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum evacuated the suburbs of Chateau-Thierry on the 8th of February; and in order to secure his retreat, destroyed an arch of the stone bridge, which divides the town from the suburbs, and which was immediately occupied by the Prussians. On the 9th, at break of day, the riflemen of the two armies fired on each other with great determination from opposite banks of the river: but General York, perceiving that the French troops retired in good order on Ferte-sous-Jouarre, and disputed the ground, foot by foot, in every position that was susceptible of defence, threw a bridge of boats over the Marne. Chateau-Thierry was plunged in grief when thus abandoned; and the sound of the first Prussian trumpet was agonizing. Several Prussian battalions entered the place; and Russian brigades appeared soon afterwards, supported by artillery and cavalry. The allies immediately extended in all directions, announcing that they were on their march to Paris, which they intended to enter on the succeeding

Sunday; that Napoleon was forced, on the side of Troyes, to make head against the grand allied army; and that the road to Meaux was only protected by the Duke of Tarentum's corps, which was incapable of opposing any resistance. "We are only," said they, "the advanced guard of the powerful army commanded by the valiant and invincible Field-Marshal Blucher." In fact, these troops ardently wished to be the first that arrived at Paris, and valued themselves upon the hônour which would result from taking possession of the capital before the Austrians. "Paris" was their universal rallying cry. Some had the word written on their hats; and the cossacks never uttered it without a loud shout of ferocious joy. The bridge of boats being at length constructed over the Marne, General York quitted Chateau-Thierry, to continue his march on Meaux and the capital, leaving simply a garrison in the place. At the same time, Field-Marshal Blucher removed his head-quarters from Vertus to Etoges, on the road from Chalons to Paris, preceded by the Russian corps of General Sacken, which pushed its advanced guard to Dormans and Ferte-sur-Jouarre, thus occupying all the country from Fromentiere and Montmirail to the Marne, being no more than three days' march from Paris, and beyond the line on which the French army was manœuvring. The army of Silesia, therefore, now threatened the capital in full earnest. The Marshal Duke of Tarentum, after destroying the bridges of La Ferte and

Treeport, had retired to Meaux; and there his feeble army could not stop the progress of the enemy. On the other points, detachments from the Prince of Schwartenberg's grand army touched upon the gates of Sens, and his light troops pushed forward to Melun, distant ten leagues from Paris. Napoleon observed these different offensive movements from his position at Nogent, and appeared to have no means of arresting them. He was doubly outflanked, and saw the enemy almost in front of his capital. The general opinion was loudly against him, and the remains of his empire seemed to be falling into dissolution. The Regent, the ministers, and counsellors prepared to quit the metropolis. The imperial treasure, the public chests, the most valuable objects of art, and the archives of foreign affairs were packed up. The flames had already devoured a large portion of the secret accusations which filled the office of police. Paris was ready to open its gates. Every well-informed and enlightened person, whether in the army, or administration, or private life, considered the *dénouement* as at hand. Every one hailed its approach as putting an end to the tortures of suspence.

But Napoleon had not yet exhausted all the means of opposition; and by one of his violent determinations he succeeded, beyond his own expectation, in preserving himself for the moment from the abyss which was opening at his feet.

Suddenly struck by one of those bright intel-

lectual flashes, which, in the days of his glory, shed lustre on his military genius, he resolved, by a bold and rapid march to fall on the flank and rear of Field-Marshal Blucher's army, and compel it to stay its progress. He calculated that, if he made his way by Villenoxe and Sezanne, he would arrive in two days upon the road from Chalons to Paris, and that, after having deprived the Silesian army of its principal communications, he could attack it as above described.

But the execution of this project, though favoured by the separation of the hostile corps, which were marching in *echelon*, at too great distances from each other, was nevertheless attended with difficulties, which would have discouraged any other commander. The road from Nogent to Sezanne was nearly impassable. The soil in this part of the country is greasy and unsound, and it was now rendered worse by the rains, which had fallen almost without intermission since the beginning of winter. It was generally thought impossible, at all events, that the artillery could pass.

This circumstance had inspired the Prussians and Russians with a sort of security, and they had no idea of being impeded on their march. The truth is, that they also supposed the army of Napoleon to be upon another military line.

Since the 7th of February, the Marshal Duke of Ragusa, and the Marshal Prince of the Moskwa had, with their respective corps, taken the direc-

tion of Sezanne and Barbonne, though Napoleon had not yet stopped his plan of operation; but on the 9th in the morning, all uncertainty, on their parts, was at an end. Having resolved from the bottom of his soul, to bring back Fortune under his banners by a bold and decisive measure, Buonaparte dispatched Count Arthur de la Bourdonnaye, the Prince of Wagram's aide-de-camp, to inform the two marshals that the Emperor was on his way with the main army, and that they must make preparations to attack the enemy next day, as it had been ascertained that the latter was marching on the road from Chalons to Montmirail. Such an order surprised the Marshals the more, because some of their reconnoitring dragoons had been swamped and lost in this marshy district, which made them consider the transport of artillery as impracticable; but the strict execution of Buonaparte's will being the first duty, imposed by his military code, they did not hazard any objection, more especially as their opinion was not particularly asked. The movement of the main army, which consisted in part of the veteran imperial guard, and the troops drawn from Spain, was effected with inconceivable celerity. They began their march on the 9th of February, bending towards Seganne, by Villenoxe and Barbonne; and on this first day the presentiments of the two Marshals were on the point of being realized; for the general, commanding the artillery, announced to Napoleon the impossibility

of continuing the movement by the forest of Traconne, the train being already engulphed in the marshy road near Villenoxe. "Forward," answered Napoleon, "if we leave some pieces of cannon behind us." He was obeyed. The soldiers themselves now drew the ordnance, and even carried it in their arms. But still, most of the army despaired of success; and even these efforts seemed incapable of conquering the obstacles opposed to them; had not the Mayor of Barbonne suddenly collected five hundred horses belonging to the peasantry, by which the train was disengaged, after some loss in men, horses, and cannon. Thanks to this unexpected succour, the expedition now proceeded, but could not reach Sezanne 'till towards night; and this place being unprovided with magazines, offered but poor shelter and accommodation to thirty thousand men.

Napoleon was now undecided whether to take the road on his left from Sezanne to Montmirail, or the one of Champeaubert on his right. He decided upon the latter, in the hope of falling upon the extreme rear-guard of the two corps, commanded by Generals Sacken and York, which he hoped to engage separately. The first was posted at Montmirail, and the other at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre, both having their advanced guard pushed two or three leagues in front of the Marne, near Chateau-Thierry and Meaux. The intelligence of the allied army having entered Troyes, and the bad state of the roads from the Seine to the

Marne, rendered the above Russian and Prussian commanders quite easy as to any decisive movement on the part of Napoleon in this tranverse line. But on the 10th at day-break, he headed nis troops in person, and conducted them to the heights of Saint Prix; then causing the Duke of Ragusa's army to pass the swampy defile of Saint-Gond, he ordered the marshal to attack the village of Baye. At this point the advanced guard of the Russian General Alsufieff was stationed, the main body of his corps being at Champeaubert, and serving as an intermediate force between the army of Field-Marshal Blucher, then at Vertus, and the corps of General Sacken. This advanced guard immediately deployed, and uncovered a battery of eight pieces of cannon. The divisions of Ricart and Lagrange, with the cavalry of the first corps, attacked the village of Baye on the right, and at one o'clock Napoleon was in possession of it. General Alsufieff, being unprovided with cavalry, and seeing himself attacked by five or six thousand dragoons, as well as a superior body of infantry, concentrated all his force, to the amount of four thousand men on Champeaubert, intending to fight as he retreated; but at this time the cavalry of the imperial guard deployed on the fine plains between Baye and Champeaubert, attacking and turning the Russians, in order to intercept their march on the Chalons road. In vain did General Alsufieff form his infantry into squares. In vain did he attempt to resist the shock of the French

cavalry, and the fire of its numerous batteries. The Russians, seeing themselves turned, gave way, and attempted to retire by the road of Epernay. The Marshal Duke of Ragusa took Champeaubert from them; and at the same instant the French *cuirassiers*, charging their right, drove them to a wood and lake, between Epernay and Chalons. Having now no means of retreat, they dispersed in confusion and dismay. Artillery, infantry, and cavalry fled into the woods and marshes. Part of them were drowned in the lakes; another portion bravely rallied, and for a considerable time resisted the destructive onset of the French, till they were at length compelled to lay down their arms. The general, several colonels, and more than two thousand men were made prisoners. Of twenty-four cannon, nine remained in the hands of the victors; the rest were either thrown into the lake, or preceded the fugitives, who, being favored by the woods and darkness, escaped the pursuit of the French cavalry. Thus the whole advanced guard of the Russians was destroyed, taken, or dispersed; and this signal advantage cost the conquerors only three or four hundred killed and wounded. Among the latter was the General of Division, Count Lagrange, who received a slight contusion of the head.

But Napoleon aimed at still greater results, and hoped to defeat General Sacken's whole corps. At eight o'clock in the evening General Nansouty marched to Montmirail, with two divisions of ca-

valry belonging to the guard, and under the orders of General Colbert and Laferriere. He seized the village immediately, and a hundred cossacks who occupied it. At five in the morning General Guyot's division of cavalry also advanced on Montmirail; but the infantry was retarded in its movements by the frightful state of the roads between Sezanne and Champeaubert. In no instance could the train of artillery have followed the column, but for the determined perseverance of the men, and the assistance rendered by the inhabitants.

Meanwhile, General Sacken, having learnt the disaster of his advanced guard, quitted Ferte-sous-Jouarre, and had marched all night towards Montmirail, after having dispatched several messages to General York; who, by his advice, marched, but at a slower rate, from the environs of Meaux in the same direction. Hence every thing seemed to presage a battle, the issue of which would be of the highest importance.

Buonaparte, being afraid that when the French army was engaged with General Sacken's corps, other hostile troops might approach by the Chalons road, ordered the corps of the Marshal Duke of Ragusa to Etoges, that it might cover the army on its right.

On the 11th of February, at eleven o'clock in the day, General Sacken's corps, reinforced by three brigades from that of General York, appeared before Montmirail, where Napoleon had arrived

with the division of Ricard, and the imperial guard. The Russian army consisted of only eighteen to twenty thousand men; but being no longer able to avoid a battle, General Sacken rested his centre upon the farm of Epine-au-Rois, on the road from Montmirail to Ferte-sous-Jouarre, his left on the village of Fontenelle, between Montmirail and Chateau-Thierry, and his right on the river Petit Morin, behind the village of Marchais. Napoleon, suspecting that the Russians would make their first effort at Marchais, posted Ricard's division there, under the immediate command of the Marshal Prince of the Moskwa, and these troops had scarcely occupied their position when they were attacked. The village was twice taken and re-taken. The Russians exhibited, in assailing it, as much impetuosity as the French displayed determination and bravery in defending it. The action continued more than five hours; at the end of which the armies found themselves in the same position that each had originally occupied; but Buonaparte wished to wait for the arrival of his guards, who had left Sezanne in the morning, and thus a great part of the day was employed in cannonading, except at the village of Marchais, where the fire of musketry was constantly kept up. Night now approached, and Napoleon, having at length received his reinforcements, decided upon commencing a serious attack, without waiting for the rest of the army. He ordered General Ricard to cede the ground on the

side of Marchais, that the enemy might be induced to make his principal attack in this quarter, and thereby leave his centre exposed. At the same time General Nansouty received orders to move with his cavalry on the right; while sixteen battalions of the veteran guard, under the command of General Friant, formed themselves into a single column along the road to attack the enemy, each battalion a hundred steps asunder. The artillery also arrived; and soon after, the Marshal Duke of Treviso with his corps. This body of picked men moved by Montmirail. The success of the day appeared to depend upon assailing the centre, or carrying Epine-aux-Bois, which was the key of the Russian position. Forty pieces of cannon defended the approaches to it. The hedges were lined with a triple row of riflemen, and the infantry battalions were stationed in the rear to support them. Napoleon gave the signal. Instantly General Friant darted towards Epine-aux-Bois, with several regiments of guards; the Duke of Treviso repaired, with six other battalions, to the right of General Friant; and General Nansouty, with the greatest part of the French cavalry, extended on the right of the enemy, thereby causing anxiety on the part of General Sacken, as to the possibility of his retreat being cut off. When master of Marchais he had thought that he might weaken his centre without danger, for the purpose of strengthening his right. The imperial guard profited by this movement, rushed towards the farm of Haute-

Epine, and charged the Russians with great impetuosity. On seeing so formidable a body, the Russian sharp-shooters retired upon the main force; but the French followed up their vigorous attack. The conflict became sanguinary, and success was for some time balanced; for though the artillery could not play, the musketry fire was incessant. Perhaps the victory would have been left undecided, had not the lancers, dragoons, and horse-grenadiers of Buonaparte's guard appeared on the right of Haute-Epine, and thrown themselves on the rear of the Russian cavalry, with shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" The Russians, thus furiously and unexpectedly assailed, were broken and thrown into disorder. The French infantry, availing itself of the advantage gained by the cavalry, precipitated itself upon the alarmed enemy, who now perceiving his only safety to consist in flight, abandoned his position, artillery, and baggage. The Duke of Treviso, on his part, sustained the attack, carried the village of Fontenelle, and took six pieces of cannon in a battery. The division called the guard of honour, on arriving at the heights of Epine-aux-Bois, made a movement on the left towards Marchais, while the Marshal Duke of Dantzig, at the head of two battalions of the veteran guard, also advanced on the village; which was now situated between two fires. Every person in the place was either put to the sword, killed by the fire, made prisoner, or compelled to fly. In less than a quarter of an

hour, a profound silence succeeded the roaring of cannon, and the report of musketry. The Russians, in excessive disorder—generals, officers, soldiers, infantry, cavalry, artillery, precipitately retired by the road of Chateau-Thierry, after having lost five to six thousand men, killed wounded or prisoners; while the conquerors had only to regret twelve to fifteen hundred. But the French troops were exhausted by fatigue, and in want of repose; besides which, it was eight o'clock in the evening, and darkness did not allow a pursuit of the enemy, while the latter, rallying on some new Prussian corps which he found upon the road, was protected in his retreat.

General Sacken had not been able to bring into the line more than twenty thousand men, against forty to fifty thousand, composed of fresh troops, successively arriving on the field of battle. It is true that they were not all brought into action; but nothing could have prevented the defeat of the Russians in the end. Their general committed an error, by persisting in the plan of strengthening his right, while his left was in reality more menaced. It is probable too that Napoleon would have obtained greater results, if he had not, from the beginning of the day, caused the battle to be maintained in front of the village; and had sent a mass of force to the left of the enemy, which was weak. The cavalry, dispatched to this point, extended its movement too far, and produced little effect. Nevertheless, the battle of Marchais, ge-

nerally called the battle of Montmirail, must be regarded as a complete victory; augmented by the circumstance of several French corps not being engaged, and the small loss sustained. In fact, General Ricard's division was the only one that suffered.

On the following day, (viz. the 12th of February) the Marshal Duke of Treviso pursued the Russians by the direct road from Montmirail to Chateau-Thierry; and Napoleon, who had fixed his head-quarters at Haute-Epine, so gloriously acquired, moved on Vieux-Maison, whence he also marched straight to Chateau-Thierry. The baggage of the Allies had passed this way—the mire was extremely deep—waggons, and wrecks of equipage lay scattered on all sides.

The enemy continued his retreat, in company with eight battalions, which had not arrived soon enough to join the contest. On reaching the village of Coquerets, he wished to defend this position, which is behind a brook, and thereby cover the road of Chateau-Thierry; but a battalion of the veteran guard instantly overthrew the sharpshooters, and pursued the enemy, who, after being driven from one position to another, at length formed on the heights of Nesle, in front of Chateau-Thierry. Here Napoleon ordered another attack by six regiments of his guards, who occupied the plain; while the cavalry divisions of Defrance and Laferriere, commanded by Genera Nansouty, made a movement on the right, between

Chateau-Thierry and the Russian rear-guard, whose horse rushed from all quarters to oppose that of the French. But the numerous and determined charges of the enemy were fruitless; he was overthrown, and compelled to quit the field of battle. At the same moment, General Letort, with the dragoons of the guard, fell on the flanks and rear of eight Russian battalions, which were formed in squares, and made horrible carnage among them. Almost every man of this rear guard was killed or taken. Three cannon, and more than two thousand prisoners, among whom was the Russian General Fredenreich, remained in the possession of the conquerors. The field was covered with the dead and wounded. Every one, who could escape the fire and bayonets of the French, threw himself into Chateau-Thierry. It was Napoleon's desire that his troops should enter this place at the very heels of the Russians, without allowing them time to destroy the bridge over the Marne. He was also animated by another hope; for his agents had encouraged the inhabitants of Chateau-Thierry to fall upon the vanquished, and to detroy the bridge of boats themselves, by which all the fugitives would have been secured; but their escape could not be prevented. The victorious army, on reaching the heights of Nesle, saw the Russians and Prussians flying in the greatest disorder, and making towards the bridges over the Marne, as the main roads were

cut off, and no safety remained for them on the right bank of the river.

For some hours, artillery had been heard at Chateau-Thierry, in the direction of Montmirail. This noise, which incessantly approached, and gradually increased, caused some alarm to the reserve of the Allies, consisting of two thousand men, under the command of Prince William of Prussia. Both officers and soldiers looked anxiously at each other, walked to and fro, and made mysterious remarks. The cannonade was redoubled, it came still nearer, it indicated a defeat. This suspence was ere long removed by the arrival of the fugitive Russians, with regiments reduced to a hundred men; soldiers of different corps and uniforms confusedly intermixed, a multitude without arms or baggage, and horses sinking with fatigue. Such was the present appearance of this army, so lately full of hope and defiance. The number of fugitives was increased by the Prussian corps of General York. On first hearing of Napoleon's vigorous attack, this commander abandoned Meaux, which he had surrounded; and hastened his retreat on Chateau Thierry, where he joined the wreck of the Russian army, which had been conquered at Montmirail. The officers endeavoured to rally the troops, but in vain. The generals shouted till they were hoarse: "Courage, soldiers! we have lost nothing. There is our reserve, the bridges are guarded." In fact, Prince William

had advanced with his fresh troops to the gate of the suburbs, in order to protect the retreat of this disorganized mass, which rapidly re-crossed the Marne over the two bridges, and regained the right bank, while batteries, placed among some trees, fired on the French cavalry, as it pursued the fugitives. The Marshal Duke of Treviso, however, soon appeared on the heights at the head of the advanced guard; and in defiance of the cannon, these veterans poured down like a torrent on the troops, which occupied the suburbs, and protected the retreat. At sight of the French grenadiers, the suburbs of the left bank were precipitately abandoned. In vain did the enemy obstruct the passage by leaving on the road baggage, broken carriages, and dismounted ordnance. The advanced guard broke through all obstacles, overturning every thing that opposed its progress. Prince William had only time to unmask a battery of eight cannon, under the fire and protection of which he succeeded in effecting his own retreat, and burning his bridges. A brisk fire of musketry was kept up from both sides of the river, till eight o'clock in the evening. The inhabitants of Chateau-Thierry too, exasperated against the Russians and Prussians by Buonaparte's agents, had fallen on a great number, and destroyed them. Some were precipitated into the Marne, while others were traced by the peasantry into the woods, and murdered without mercy. These acts of manifest hostility irritated an enemy, already not a little

galled by defeat; so that on entering the town, the houses were plundered in spite of every effort made by the officers to prevent it. The gates too were broken down, and hewn to pieces; in short, the whole night between the 12th and 13th, was employed by the Russians and Prussians in pillage and devastation. The town was only saved by the retreat of their columns, which, being unable to move either on Epernay or Soissons, took a road in the direction of Rheims.

Napoleon's head-quarters had been, on the preceding night, at the Castle of Nesle, a quarter of a league from Chateau-Thierry. At dawn of day, he ordered the bridges over the Marne to be re-constructed, in order that he might pursue the enemy without delay. He advanced, at the head of his army to the stone bridge, which separates the town and suburbs, and which the enemy had broken the night before. On seeing the French troops and their leader, the inhabitants came running to the other side of the bridge, and testified their joy by repeated acclamations. Rich and poor, old and young, nay even women lent their aid to repair it. The largest trees were rolled along with facility, and after four or five hours' labour, the bridge was strong enough to allow the passage of artillery. The infantry of the National Guard could, however, hardly execute their object of pursuing the enemy, under the command of the Marshal Duke of Treviso, though the attempt was made with great resolution; but the Russians and

Prussians had tried to cover their retreat by a battery on the right bank of the Marne, which occupied the summit of Mount Blanche, and commanded the town. Nevertheless, on seeing the French army cross the Marne, and advance towards them, they turned their cannon, and fled in extreme confusion.

Victories, so unlooked for, seemed almost to partake of the miraculous even in the eyes of those who had achieved them. The French army, of late discouraged and depressed, now gave way to joy, supporting privations and fatigues without a murmur, and testifying the happiest disposition. These successes had been obtained too without any great loss, and without any extraordinary effort. Every one was astonished at having found so little resistance, on the part of enemies who had always been formidable before. It was likewise remarked that, under no circumstances of preceding wars, had so many Russian prisoners been taken; and the French soldier, who suddenly passes from despondency to confidence, began to believe what the proclamations and bulletins asserted, viz: that France, *the sacred country*, *which the foe had violated*, *would be found by him a land of fire*, *that would consume him.* The superior officers, while they deeply lamented the calamities which desolated the Empire, and ardently wished for a termination of them, could not be insensible to the glory which the troops had regained.

On the other hand, the Allies were dis-

heartened and almost stupified at a reverse so unexpected. After having considered their entry into the capital as certain, they now thought that the project must be renounced. General Sacken himself, as he passed through Chateau-Thierry, declared aloud that Napoleon had been able to raise, at such short warning, a force so immense as to make resistance impossible.

These glorious successes, however, on the part of the French, were neither complete, nor decisive. The Marshal Duke of Treviso had only passed the Marne with a division of the National Guards, while the Duke of Tarentum, from his position at Meaux, also pushed strong columns on the road of Rheims and Soissons. As to the victorious army itself, it turned suddenly towards Montmirail, to attack Field-Marshal Blucher in person. Having heard from the fugitives of the disaster at Champeaubert, he took that direction; but had only been able to collect under his orders, at Bergeres, from the 10th to the 12th of February, the Prussian corps of General Kleist, and the Russian division of Langeron's corps, commanded by General Kapsiewitz, forming in all eighteen thousand men under arms. On the 13th he had marched against the Duke of Ragusa, who occupied the position of Etoges. The Duke, not having a strong force, retreated on Montmirail. It was at Etoges that the Field-Marshal heard of Buonaparte's victorious march with his guard on Chateau-Thierry. He immediately took the di-

rection of Champeaubert, *bivouacked* there during the night of the 13th to the 14th, and on the following day pursued the Duke of Ragusa to the village of Vauchamp. This movement recalled Napoleon in great haste. At three o'clock in the morning of the 14th he left Chateau-Thierry, and made a forced march to join the Marshal Duke of Ragusa's corps, and to attack Field-Marshal Blucher with the mass of his strength, in the hope of being able to annihilate the rest of the Silesian army. At eight o'clock, the cavalry of his advanced guard appeared upon the heights of Vauchamp, rushed on six pieces of cannon, which the Prussians had stationed there, and took them. The Prussian dragoons under General Zieten, and Colonel Blucher, son of the Field-Marshal, charged the French cavalry; and Blucher soon learnt, from his son, that Napoleon had arrived upon the ground in person, with all his Guard, and all his horse.

In the mean time the Prussian infantry advanced in columns of battalions on the road which passes through the village of Janvilliers, behind Vauchamp. The French cavalry, which increased in number to the eye, suddenly appeared in great force under the command of General Grouchy, overwhelmed the dragoons of the Prussian advanced guard, and having compelled them to divide, furiously attacked the columns of infantry ranged in the plain. The Prussians immediately formed themselves into squares, firmly maintained

their ground, and opened a vigorous fire on their front, flanks and rear. Six squares were attacked at the same moment, on a large plain to the right of Janvilliers. All exerted their utmost efforts against the reiterated charges of the French cavalry; while the Russian and Prussian horse, retiring by intervals from the destructive fire in front of the squares, formed again in the rear, and advanced to resume the attack upon Napoleon's dragoons. The number of the French regiments, however, increased continually, and a large body of cavalry now threatened the flanks of the Prussian army. All the horse of Napoleon's guard arrived in full trot, and two battalions of the Prussian advanced guard (which entered the village of Janvilliers, but had not time to form) were overpowered and taken, while General Grouchy's dragoons turned and sabred three other battalions, driving the remnant of them into the woods.

Field-Marshal Blucher, being thus assailed on all sides by a superior force, and having only three regiments of cavalry, resolved to withdraw from a position unfavourable to so unequal a contest. The infantry received orders to march in columns and squares towards Eloges and Chalons, with artillery in the intervals. They were covered, on the flanks and rear, by the cavalry and rifle-men. The country, through which the retreat took place, was uncultivated, without hedges, and generally open. It was only here and there that small woods and plantations allowed the French cavalry to conceal their

movement. The Prussian infantry avoided any engagement as much as possible, that their own ranks might not be broken; and thus, for the distance of four leagues, (viz. from Janvilliers to Champeaubert) a continual retreating combat took place, in the course of which the Freneh dragoons renewed their attacks with bravery and impetuosity.

There was not a single column or square of infantry which was charged by, or exposed to the fire of the French; while the Prussians and Russians, on their part, maintained a continual fire, without interrupting the order of their march. The French cavalry were often intermixed with the squares, and almost always forced to retire with loss. Strong columns of French infantry also followed the enemy, in hopes of overtaking and destroying him.

At two o'clock Napoleon's army had passed the village of Fromentiere, without having made any impression upon the Prussians beyond their advanced guard. But Buonaparte's aim was the annihilation of Blucher's army; and he ordered General Grouchy to march on Champeaubert, keeping one league in the rear of the enemy. At the same time several corps of infantry were directed to proceed by cross-roads, and attack the two flanks of the Allies. By this double manœuvre, Napoleon evidently meant to cut off Marshal Blucher's retreat on Etoges and Chalons. In fact, at sun-set the Prussian commander perceived the main body of French

cavalry turning his flanks, after which they threw themselves on the line of his retreat, about half way between Champeaubert and Etoges, and formed themselves into solid masses on both sides of the road, with the intention of barring his passage. The Field-Marshal was surrounded; but his decision was prompt as his perception. He ordered his troops to continue their march, and to make their way through every obstacle by actual force.

The columns of squares, thus assailed on every side, continued their retreat in formidable style, always harrassed and annoyed by the French, whose artillery, cavalry and infantry advanced in regular order. The example of Marshal Blucher (who directed the movements on the road) and still more particularly of the Prussian Prince Augustus, (who was always at the head of his brigade) most powerfully contributed towards an excitement of general courage among the troops, and inspired them with a determination, which struck the French themselves with admiration and astonishment.

Field-Marshal Blucher and his staff had never left the high road, till they passed a wood on their right, towards which they rode. General Kleist and Prince Augustus of Prussia were animating the troops, who were now not far from Champeaubert, when they perceived themselves completely encircled by the French cavalry. The Prince instantly drew his sabre, and exclaimed, "It is better to die than to be taken." His aid-de-camps

followed his example, and proceeded towards the wood sword in hand. "Your attempt will be a fruitless one," said General Guisneau to his Royal Highness; "for the enemy is also on the other side of the wood. Nothing remains for us but to use the support of our infantry." At this very instant a Russian battalion faced about, and after several vollies, forced the assailing cavalry to withdraw, leaving a passage open. The cavalry, thus repulsed, made its ulterior attacks only upon the flanks and rear of the retreating army.

Throughout the whole march of these Prussian and Russian columns, annoyed as they were, not a single battalion was thrown into confusion, but the order of battle was strictly preserved throughout. They had now reached the forest of Etoges, when twenty French cuirassiers, who had stolen through the wood, surrounded the staff of Field-Marshal Blucher; but these men were in such a state of drunkenness that they were not even able to draw their sabres, consequently the greater part were either killed or taken.

At night-fall, the attacks of the infantry succeeded to those of the cavalry. Several French regiments had passed the Prussian army by cross-roads, and lay in ambush on the heights of Etoges; at the moment that the Allies entered the village, they were assailed by discharges of musketry. Generals Kleist and Kapsiewitz, however, again encouraged their respective corps to surmount the obstacles opposed to them,

and passed through the place by main force, though not without considerable loss. A Russian division formed the rear guard, which was attacked at the point of the bayonet, and broken by the first regiment of marines under the Marshal Duke of Ragusa. A thousand prisoners were taken on the occasion; among whom was General Ourosouff, and several colonels. But by dint of courage and perseverance, the Field-Marshal succeeded in conducting the main body of his army to the position of Bergere, where he caused it to *bivouac*, after sustaining a loss of more than four thousand men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, together with nine pieces of cannon. It is true, that Blucher had to contend against an army which was *twice* as strong as his own; nay, the cavalry was *thrice* as strong, for there were nearly eight thousand French horse engaged; and a principal part of these were the flower of the Imperial guard. The Russian and Prussian artillery, however, was more numerous, and proved itself superior to the French; whose train, besides, could not follow the columns, on account of the difficulty of the roads. The loss in Napoleon's cavalry was about a thousand men, and as many horses, killed and wounded. Among the wounded was General Lyon of the guard. The Prince of Wagram, Count Bertrand, Marshal of the Palace, the Duke of Dantzig, and the Prince of the Moskwa, constantly headed the pursuing columns. The ardour of the soldiery was also frequently excited by the presence of Na-

poleon himself; but he was, nevertheless, enraged at seeing the Silesian army escape.

Satisfied, however, with the happy effects produced on the spirit of the army by this unexpected success, and his rapid movements; struck too with the advantages which would result to his cause, when the intelligence reached the capital; and further, being called to the banks of the Seine, where other enemies had appeared in force, still threatening the metropolis, he did not follow up the pursuit beyond the village of Etoges; but left Field-Marshal Blucher to accomplish his admirable retreat towards Chalons. This military position presented to the brave veteran the advantage of being able there to form a junction of his different corps. He had received intimation, during the battle, that General York and General Sacken had safely reached Rheims, and that numerous reinforcements, both from the north and east, were only two or three days' march from him. As the corps of his army could, therefore, be easily collected and strengthened, he saw himself upon the eve of being again in a state to manœuvre against his formidable adversary, with the confidence which numbers and unison produce.

CHAPTER VIII.

Effects of the late Victory on the Army of Silesia—The Russian and Prussian prisoners are marched in procession through Paris—The Grand Austro-Russian Army moves along the Seine and Yonne—The Cossacks spread themselves as far as the Gates of Orleans—They are repulsed at Sens—They take Courtenay, Montargis, and Nemours—Siege of Sens by the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg—Capture of that place—Nogent is attacked, set on Fire, and nearly destroyed—The Marshal Dukes of Reggio and Belluno cause the Bridges of Nogent, Bray, and Montereau to be destroyed; and fall back on the right bank of the Seine—The Allies seize the last mentioned three Towns—Their hesitation—They pass the Seine, and push as far as Provins and Nangins—New alarms at Paris—Napoleon marches to encounter the Grand Austro-Russian Army—Battle of Nangis and Mormant—Defeat of Count Wittgenstein's corps—Battle of Montereau—Re-capture of that place—Retreat of the Allies—Cause of their Defeat.

THROUGHOUT France, and indeed all Europe, the triumphant entry of the Allies into Paris, towards the beginning of February, had been considered infallible; and Napoleon seemed, at this period, to have arrived at the goal of his career as Emperor; but all at once, by the rapidity of his marches, and the boldness of his manœuvres, he brought fortune back to his cause, changed the aspect of the war, and prolonged its calamities. By balancing the destinies of the world for fifty days longer, he produced effects on public opinion so remarkable, that they become the property of history.

Paris, in particular, suddenly exchanged its

stupor and depression for blind security. Whether by accident or design, the extraordinary courier, sent with the intelligence of the victory at Champeaubert, arrived at the Thuileries during a parade; and the dispatch was immediately read aloud to the assembled troops. It announced that all the officers and soldiers had been either killed, or taken, including the commander in chief. Bulletins were also directly distributed on the public walks, and at the theatres; while a salvo of sixty cannon confirmed the news. People stopped each other in the streets to talk of this immense victory, and the general declaration was that the Russian army had been entirely destroyed. The downcast became cheerful—security and confidence revived. More couriers arrived, announcing the defeat of General Sacken at Montmirail, and of Field-Marshal Blucher himself at Vauchamp.

Of course the official details and commentaries followed; and, of course they were, as heretofore, endited by imposition, and propagated by credulity. "Fortune has recognised our colours; and the presumptuous enemy, who was lately parcelling-out our provinces—the enemy, who was so confidently marching on our capital, delighted with the idea of our humiliation—the enemy is conquered, pursued, and flying before our eagles. Officers, soldiers, citizens—all are equally transported. The armies of Sacken and Blucher are destroyed; their artillery, and all their equipage are in our power. More than a hundred Russian

and Prussian regiments have been annihilated in three battles. Twenty thousand prisoners, a hundred and eighty pieces of cannon, two commanders-in-chief taken, or mortally wounded, are the trophies of these immortal days. Nothing but a mere wreck of a corps has escaped. The woods, the villages, the fields are encumbered with the bodies of Russians and Prussians, as well as broken carriages, chests, &c. Perhaps not a single hostile soldier would have escaped to carry the account of this disgrace to the Allies, if the inhabitants of Chateau-Thierry had been able to destroy the bridge of boats, thrown over the Marne by the Russians, but the peasants are active in pursuit of the fugitives, and the authorities have resumed their vigour. All are busily employed in embarrassing the retreat of the few, who have escaped. All are animated by the report of our success, and every Frenchman associates himself with the glory of the French arms.

Although these statements were ridiculously exaggerated, it was still incontestible that the Allies had experienced severe checks, which may be ascribed to the want of combination in their movements. It was equally evident that Napoleon had rescued his capital from a foreign army, which seemed to be animated with sentiments of hatred and revenge. The joy, resulting from this success, degenerated into a kind of arrogant intoxication on his part, so completely was he convinced that his destiny depended upon the preservation of Paris.

His official bulletins were by no means in contradiction with himself. "The army of Silesia," said he, "which consisted of eighty thousand men, has been beaten, dispersed, and annihilated in four days, without any general action, and without occasioning any loss proportionate to such great results."

From the transports manifested by the partisans of government, one might have imagined that the enemy had been driven two hundred leagues from the capital. So far did they carry their absurd credulity, that they thought the war at an end, and were convinced that the Allies would be exterminated before they could regain the Rhine. They recognized the great commander, who had subdued so many nations. The creatures of the court endeavoured to excite this silly enthusiasm in every quarter, supporting it with all the zeal of variety and interest.

"The expedition to the Marne," said they, "is one of the most astonishing which Napoleon's military life can boast, whether we consider the profundity of the plan, the boldness of the execution, or the utility of the results."

At court too, letters from the army were in circulation, consequently evidence from officers who had been present on the late memorable occasions. "We have beaten the Russians and Prussians," was the language of the writers at head-quarters, "and are now going to fight the other allied army. We are all full of ardour and hope.

The offensive movement, which we have so gloriously terminated, and by which we have gained more than if we had won two regular battles, was undertaken with a force inferior to that of the enemy, whom we conquered in detail. Our losses are so inconsiderable, compared with his, that we ourselves are astonished; but the Allies were surprised, and the greater their confidence, the easier has been their defeat. These corps are become absolutely useless to the other army, which we are about to engage."

Such, in fact, had been the confidence of the Russian and Prussian troops, that imagining the French army to have no longer existence, they considered their march to Paris as a military *promenade*. To extenuate their defeat at Champeaubert, they stated that they had been surprised, and inclosed in a defile, without having the power to form or act. "Napoleon," added they, "has caused the flower and mass of his army to march in the most inclement season, through frightful roads, with unpitying rapidity. Fifteen hundred of his men died from fatigue and hunger during these six days of continual fighting, and marching beyond human strength."

All this was true, but what could not a conqueror undertake with soldiers, who would submit to, and support any thing, in order to obtain victory?

The multitude at Paris gave the greater scope to joy, because Napoleon had caused the Allies,

particularly the Russians, to be described as savage barbarians, who had not an idea beyond the sword, devastation and pillage. "There is no species of vexation, cruelty, or crime," said the persons, instructed by Buonaparte, "which these northern hordes have not already committed in France. Our peasants have pursued them like wild beasts, and brought them bound to the French troops; a system by which the number of prisoners has been greatly augmented."

Thus all the springs of public opinion, all the sentiments which could excite human passions, were brought into action; and hence arose the indignation, the courage, the hope, the confidence, which gradually pervaded the whole metropolis.

Religion had not been forgotten. Cardinal Maury, who was become the disgrace of the French church, and at this time presided at the head of the Parisian clergy, had ordered public prayers to God for the success of Napoleon's arms, and had thus expressed himself in a mandate, dated the 1st of February.—" Doubt not that God will be with the great captain, who caused the protection of Heaven to be this day supplicated by all his people, who is the chosen of the Lord, whose genius is the soul of France, and his sword her defence. O God! deign to preserve the hero, whom thou hast given us to be sovereign over France, and whose tutelary government we hail as the greatest of the blessings thou hast bestowed. Cover

him, we pray, with thy egis, amidst the dangers of war," &c.

Still more completely to rouse national enthusiasm, and carry conviction to every mind, Napoleon resolved to treat the Parisians with a sort of triumphant spectacle. On the 18th of February, he caused General Alsufieff and other officers of distinction, who had been taken during the late battles, to enter Paris in the middle of the day, just as a column of six thousand prisoners was also approaching. The sun shed a splendour on one of the finest winter days, and the whole population of the capital crowded to the *boulevards*, the quays, and other public places. Every one was anxious to behold so uncommon a sight. The Russians and Prussians, arrived by the barriers of Pantin and Clarenton, in long columns, and French generosity appeared on this occasion in all its native lustre. The Parisians beheld in their disarmed enemies nothing but unfortunate men, and offered provisions as well as assistance of every kind,—a *trait* in their character the most noble, because the offer was made to foreign soldiers, who brought into France all the calamities of war. But it was enough that they were now captives. Money, food, clothing,—all were lavished upon them in spite of the police-agents, who, surprised at the unexpected effect which to affecting a spectacle had produced upon the people, declaimed against and insulted the prisoners. The

mass of the Parisians, however, preserved that calm and dignified attitude which belongs to a civilized nation, not yet corrupted by the long triumph of guilt. This noble day presaged the advance of reconciliation among the great European family.

Other columns of prisoners followed, and equally experienced the kind compassion of the people. This warlike appearance of troops continually arriving and departing, and the return of security, which had been banished for several months, imparted to the capital a most animated and imposing appearance.

All at once, however, while Napoleon's triumph was the theme of every one's discourse, the Generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, finding the roads of the Seine open, advanced along that river and the Yonne, at the head of the grand Austro-Russian army. New inquietudes were, therefore, soon to be the lot of the Parisians.

When Napoleon left Nogent-sur-Seine, on the 9th of February, for the purpose of manœuvring on the Marne against the army of Silesia, he stationed the corps of the Marshal Duke of Belluno before Nogent, and the seventh corps, under the command of the Marshal Duke of Reggio at Provins; the latter being charged with the defence of the bridges at Bray and Montereau. Another corps was stationed near the latter place, and Melun, under Generals Pactol and Pajol.

The offensive movement of the grand allied

army commenced on three different roads at the same time, viz. those of Sens, Orleans, and Nogent-sur-Seine. Since the 30th of January, the Austro-Russians had been in possession of Joigny; and the Hetman Platoff, at the head of six to seven thousand cossacks, had been reconnoitring towards Sens. This city, which is advantageously situated for commerce, in a fertile country at the confluence of the Vanne and the Yonne, had long been an object of Napoleon's aversion, and he never would stop there. He could not forgive the religious care with which the inhabitants have long preserved the magnificent mausoleum, erected at that place to the memory of the Dauphin and Dauphiness, father and mother of Louis the Eighteenth and Monsieur—a monument, which filial piety has just restored with so much zeal. He knew also that his government was held in abhorrence at Sens, and that, for a whole year, not a person could be found who would execute the functions of mayor. This was enough to make him devote the city to destruction. He had confided its defence to General Alix, who was his creature; and whose obstinacy could not fail to draw down upon it all the calamities of war. This officer had not more than seven to eight hundred regular soldiers, and yet he determined on holding out to the last extremity. What a cruel prospect for the inhabitants! The city is surrounded by a thick and lofty wall of Roman construction, and by a broad moat, which protects it from a *coup-*

de-main; but it cannot sustain a regular siege. General Alix caused it to be barricaded; and prescribed violent measures, which seemed to forebode great disasters. The Hetman Platoff endeavoured to surprise it with a body of twelve to fifteen hundred cossacks on the 2nd of February; but was repulsed. Finding that it could not be taken but by infantry, and by means of a regular attack, the Hetman left some cossacks in the environs to observe the place, and repaired to Courtenay, where Captain Berchmann of the Russian guards had just released four hundred Spanish officers and forty soldiers, lately prisoners of war, whom he was transferring to Bourges. The Hetman entered Courtenay on the 7th, and directly sent the Russian General Seslavin to Montargis, which he took on the 12th. The whole country was subjected to requisitions. The cossacks spread themselves as far as the gates of Orleans, in order to intercept the communications and succours which Napoleon received from the centre of the empire, and the country beyond the Loire. Abundant resources were found in this district, and conveyed to the grand Austro-Russian army.

The resistance of Sens impeded the Allies, whose light troops were destined to approach Paris by Fontainebleau, Melun, Corbeil and Villejuif. On the 10th of February, the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg appeared at the gates of Sens with his corps, consisting of six thousand Wurtemberg men, as well as some Russian and

Bavarian batallions. He learnt that General Alix had received reinforcements, that he had ordnance, and that he meant to defend the place. Towards evening, however, he caused the suburbs to be attacked by his light troops, made himself master of them, and kept up a fire of musketry all night. At the same time he sent an officer, who summoned the garrison to surrender. The French general replied, that the place was in a state of defence, and that he would maintain it. On the 11th, all the four corps of the allies being collected, the Prince Royal attempted to destroy the gates of Sens by his artillery, but he found them barricaded and walled. He then threw some shells into the town, which was soon set on fire in several places: In vain did the inhabitants implore General Alix to end a defence, which must entail ruin upon them. His only answer was, that he would cause any person to be shot who proposed a surrender. He had succeeded in extinguishing the flames, and defied the bombs and balls. The Allies were on the point of abandoning their object, when they discovered a postern, leading into a building connected with the college; the gardens of which extended to the suburbs. The Prince Royal immediately directed his attack to this point; and General Alix, on his part, sent the greater part of the garrison thither. The eighth Wurtemberg regiment was the first which penetrated into the inclosure of the college, but beyond the outer gate some strong masonry work was

found, and the whole college was filled with troops, who poured a galling fire upon the assailants. The regiment was, nevertheless, supported; and the sappers having made a sort of opening or breach, the Allies succeeded in gaining possession of the inner court. There, however, they had to encounter new obstacles; for they found the communication with the city intercepted by an iron portal, and a grating; behind which the French resolutely defended themselves. Thus attacked in the very interior of the establishment, the Wurtemberg corps sustained a great loss in killed and wounded, but being constantly reinforced, they at last surmounted all difficulties, took the college by assault, and secured the means of entering the city. Four regiments immediately penetrated into it from four different sides, in defiance of a musketry fire from all the houses, which General Alix had furnished with soldiers. This commandant had only time to rally the wreck of his garrison, and take refuge on the other side of the Yonne; leaving in the power of the Allies a colonel, a brigade-major, several other officers, and a hundred soldiers. The bridge over the Yonne being undermined, the Prince Royal did not venture to molest the garrison in their retreat. Thus, after twelve successive days of assault, Sens fell into the hands of the Allies. Its useless and cruel resistance caused it to be plundered for several hours by the victors, who were enraged at having lost so many brave men before the gates of a city, not

provided with regular fortifications. But deeply as the inhabitants felt the losses they sustained, they could not forget that the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg endeavoured to alleviate their misfortunes as far as he was able.

At the time that Sens was assaulted, several divisions of the Grand Austro-Russian army had put themselves in motion from Troyes towards Nogent-sur-Seine. On the 9th of February, General Hardeg had attacked the rear-guard, posted between Romilly, and Saint-Hilaire; which he drove back towards Nogent with some loss. On the 10th, the Prince of Schwartzenberg reconnoitred the position of Nogent in person, with a view of making a movement on this town, and thereby attracting the attention of the French, while he forced the passage of the Seine at other points. On his arrival in the neighbourhood of Nogent, the Generalissimo renewed the attack upon the rear-guard of the French, which occupied a position between Marnay and Saint-Aubin. General Hardeg debouched by the Saint-Aubin road, and General Count Wittgenstein by that of Marnay. The French yielded the position, and fell back on Nogent. The *Chateau de la Chapelle*, situated near this place, was attacked, defended, and carried on the same day.

General Count Wittgenstein also put himself in motion towards Pont-sur-Seine; General Count de Wrede marched towards Bray with the Bavarian corps; and General Bianchi, supported by

the corps of General Count Giulay, took the direction of the bridges at Montereau, the occupation of which was of great importance towards the success of an offensive movement. The reserves of the Grand Army also advanced towards the left bank of the Seine.

The approach of so formidable a force at the moment that Napoleon was manœuvering against the army of Silesia on the Marne, determined the Marshal Duke of Belluno to re-pass the Seine with his feeble divisions, and shelter himself on the right bank. The Marshal left General Count de Bourmont at Nogent with twelve hundred men, instructing him to defend the town most obstinately. This General accordingly lost no time in barricading the streets, embattling the houses, making hasty entrenchments, and constructing palisades. He adopted those military measures, which were best adapted to stop the progress of the assailants, but at the same time, most certain to entail ruin upon an industrious town. Such were the orders of Napoleon.

On the 11th of February, at nine o'clock in the morning, General Hardeg began the attack, but not impetuously, hoping that the place would surrender rather than uselessly sacrifice a numerous commercial population; but General Bourmont successfully repulsed the first efforts of the Austians. His troops were not only protected behind the works; but the cannonade of the besiegers also produced little effect, from the distance of their batte-

ries; and when the Austrian columns advanced, they were instantly annoyed by the fire of the French batteries, which were placed with discernment. The discharge of artillery and musketry was incessant; and during this dreadful conflict, the women, infants, and old people hid themselves in cellars. Part of the inhabitants had taken up arms, and joined in the defence of the town. So destructive were the first attacks, that the Austrians lost more than a thousand men, while the besieged had only to regret about three hundred, killed or wounded. The inhabitants fired from the houses, and the struggle was furiously maintained. General Bourmont was wounded in the knee, and resigned the command to Colonel Raviere.

From this resistance on the part of the French, the Austrians concluded that the houses of Nogent were transformed into a species of citadels; and when they renewed the attack next day, they determined on throwing shells into the place. In a moment it was on fire, and a third part of the houses became the prey of the flames. Bullets and cannon balls flew through every quarter of the town; but Napoleon's intention was followed up with scrupulous exactness, and the enemy's progress was arrested for two days.

The Austrians now received reinforcements; and General Count de Wrede was on the point of seizing Bray, while Montereau saw itself seriously attacked by General Bianchi's corps. Nogent,

thus situated, had no chance of escape; but the Duke of Belluno ordered the bridge to be destroyed, and the troops to rally in the forest of Sourdun, either at Provins, or at Nangins, where his corps was posted at the time. Scarcely had the garrison of Nogent time to light the match, prepared for the purpose of blowing-up the bridge. A hundred and fifty Russian soldiers, with a Colonel, were hastening over it, when it burst into fragments with a loud explosion. The fall of Nogent was now certain. The Allies took possession of it on the 12th of February, at sunset. A small open town, without regular fortifications, and of no importance but from its topographical position, cost nearly two thousand lives. The garrison, which had defended itself with so much valour, fell hastily back upon Provins, resolved to maintain itself before that place, in the forest of Sourdun; but being attacked in front, this position was lost of course; there not being a sufficient force to cover the roads of Bray and Montereau.

The town of Montereau, distant twenty leagues from Paris, is built at the confluence of the Yonne and Seine, which unite their streams in the centre of the place itself. The part which occupies the left bank of the Yonne, and which is the most considerable, is connected with the right bank by a stone bridge. Another bridge, which is celebrated by the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy in 1419, connects, in like manner, the two banks of the Seine. These two rivers, the navigation of

which is very active at Montereau, impart a cheerful appearance to this little town, and induce a hope that it may one day become the *entrepôt* of interior commerce. Towards the East and South, a rich and fertile plain extends to a great distance. Montereau, and part of this plain are commanded by a chain of hills covered with vines, several of which are only a musket-shot from the town. Faithful to his plan of resistance, or rather of destruction, Buonaparte, on his arrival at Nogent, had also caused works to be constructed before Bray and Montereau, ordering the bridges over the Yonne and Seine to be undermined, that they might be destroyed upon the approach of the enemy. The houses upon the left bank of the Seine had been embattled, as well as haste would allow. Redoubts had been constructed to defend the plain; and an attempt even made to connect these feeble works with regular batteries, stationed on the hills behind the town. These works, however, though covered by the Marshal Duke of Reggio's corps, could not long arrest the progress of the Allies.

The Austrian corps under General Bianchi, which was in possession of both banks of the Yonne, moved upon Montmireau, and took that place, without experiencing the slightest resistance. The Duke of Reggio had caused the bridges to be barricaded, and then precipitately retired on the little river Yères. There was no longer any thing to oppose the passage of the Seine, on the part of

the Allies. Count de Wittgenstein's corps, therefore, crossed it near Pont-sur-Seine; while the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, after having made himself master of Seas, directed his forces towards Pont-sur-Yonne, whence he marched on Bray in concert with the other Bavarian and Wurtemberg corps. Bray is situated on the right bank of the Seine; and the houses, belonging to it, which extend along the road to Nogent, were at this time embattled, as well as filled with soldiers. At the approach of the Allies, however, the French troops, after some demonstrations of resistance, destroyed an arch of the bridge, and fell back. General Count de Wrede immediately established himself in the place; and a detachment of his corps, forming itself into an advanced guard, crossed to the right bank, and directed its march towards Provins. General Bianchi occupied Montereau; and the positions of the Seine, which covered Paris, were forced at almost every point. The Allies advanced to the forest of Sourdon, and the Marshal Duke of Belluno fell back on Nangis, with his own corps, and the remains of the garrison of Nogent.

The Allied Monarchs had removed their headquarters from Pont-sur-Seine to Bray; and a hundred thousand fighting men might, in two or three days, have made their appearance under the walls of the capital; there being at that time no force to oppose them, except feeble corps of observation. But the Prince of Schwartzenberg, on receiving

intelligence of Napoleon's success upon the Marne, thought it expedient to suspend offensive operations; and in order to stop the French, who so much wished to follow up their advantages, he decided that the corps of General de Wrede and Count de Wittgenstein, as well as the one under the command of the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, should march on Provins and Villeneuve. At the same time he posted all the Russian corps of reserve between Mery and Nogent. The whole army occupied a position, with its right on Mery, and its left on Montereau. The divisions, posted at Provins and Villeneuve, were ready either to advance behind Buonaparte's line of operations towards the Marne, or to support the movements of the Grand Army along the left bank of the Seine towards Fontainebleau. The Generalissimo likewise caused Sezanne to be occupied by the cavalry; and sent a detachment from the reserve to Plancy.

Such was the cautious plan which the Prince of Schwartzenberg had arranged, when General Debitch, who had been sent to communicate with the army of Silesia, reported that the losses, which that army had experienced, were by no means irreparable, and that Napoleon had desisted from the pursuit of Field-Marshal Blucher. The Prince-Marshal instantly resumed his offensive preparations. The head-quarters of the Allied Sovereigns were removed from Pont-sur-Seine, a country-house belonging to Napoleon's mother, and transferred to Bray. The corps of General

Wittgenstein and General Wrede advanced by Nangis towards Melun; and General Bianchi took the road to Fontainebleau, which was occupied by the Hungarian hussars on the 16th. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg also marched on Bray, and then to Montereau.

On the 13th, the Russian advanced guaid, under the command of General Rudleer, had entered Provins: and on the 14th it had advanced upon Nangis, after having been replaced by the corps of Count Wittgenstein, which was about twelve thousand strong. The Russian soldiers, Cossacks, Baskirs, and Calmucs, occupied the town. Never had Tartars been so near Paris. It created great astonishment among the country people, when they saw enemies of so singular and wild an appearance, roasting whole oxen and sheep at a fire, made of the trees which they had cut down on their road, or devouring the half raw and bleeding joints of the animals. The presence of these undisciplined hordes; the forced requisitions which the Generals of the Allies were constrained to levy on the towns and villages, for the purpose of ensuring the subsistence of their troops; the plunder and excesses, inevitably attendant on the resistance of besieged places—all tended to make the Brie, which was now become the seat of war, a district of mourning and desolation. The inhabitants fled towards Paris, where alarm was now spreading its influence again, and the illusions, produced by the success on the Marne, were be-

ginning to vanish. "How!" exclaimed every one, "a hostile army was destroyed, yet another directly appears; and one that is not only more formidable in strength, but nearer to the capital, which it cannot fail to enter on the 19th or 20th, unless Napoleon should repulse it, by new prodigies of skill and valour."

The danger was absolutely at hand—more families fled to Normandy and Britanny—the government of Napoleon again tottered—the police was powerless, and trembled for its support—the conscripts abandoned their colours without being pursued—the courtiers resumed a downcast silence—the defence of Paris appeared a mockery, and a cruel one, since it might afford a pretext for sacking the city. To the falsehoods, contained in the bulletins and journals, this simple objection was opposed, and it remained without reply: "The enemy is already at our gates."

Nevertheless, vague rumours indicated that Napoleon was on his march from the Marne towards the Seine, for the purpose of engaging the Grand Allied Army in person.

He had received on the 14th (viz. the day, on which the battle of Vauchamp was fought) dispatches, announcing the new dangers of the capital. On the 15th at break of day, his guard, suddenly facing round, took a direction towards Montmirail, and as far as Meaux without a halt, braving fatigues and privations during a march of fourteen leagues. The whole army followed the

guard, displaying the same ardour, and encouraged by the same success. Supposing that after having conquered the Russians, nothing remained but to oppose the Austrians, victory appeared certain.

On the 16th Napoleon removed his head-quarters from Meaux to Guignes, on which place the Dukes of Reggio and Belluno had fallen back with their respective corps. Thus the concentration of all the forces was effected by a march of only two days, from the Marne to the Seine, on a line of twenty-five leagues. The Allies had, on the preceding day pushed his advanced posts to Yares; but they had retired again almost immediately, in order to take a a position between Guignes and Nangis. The general opinion, prevalent in the French camp, was that the whole Austro-Russian army was collected, and that a great battle would probably take place on the following day. The ardour of the troops was increased by this anticipation; and every one predicted the most decisive result. On the 17th Buonaparte took a direction from Guisnes on Nangis. Here three divisions of General Count Wittgenstein's corps were posted; while General Pahlen, at the head of the advanced guard, occupied Mormant with a large body of horse. Good roads and extensive plains now allowed the cavalry to manœuvre. The General of Division, Gerard, opened the attack on the village of Mormant, while the cavalry of Generals Milhaud and Kellerman assailed the village on the left, and several batteries advanced to bombard it.

A battalion of the 22d Regiment of infantry was the first that entered in full charge. The possession of the place, however, was scarcely disputed. The squares, into which the Russians had formed themselves, gave way before the artillery, and the cavalry broke them completely; so that they soon fled in the direction of Montmireau and Provins, leaving fourteen pieces of cannon, and four thousand prisoners, to attest the triumph of the French.— The troops, which had recently arrived from Spain, took a glorious part in this battle. They had brought mules and horses from the Peninsula; and after the action, it was a strange sight to behold the mules of Andalusia and the horses of Tartary stretched close to each other upon the plains of the Brie.

The victorious columns advanced—the Marshal Duke of Reggio on Provins, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum on Donne-Marie, and the Marshal Duke of Belluno on Villeneuve-le-Comte, where General de Wrede was stationed with two Bavarian Divisions. They were attacked; but the French did not succeed in breaking their ranks, or preventing their retreat. Napoleon was enraged at seeing a Bavarian force thus escape, and publicly insulted his generals, whose bravery was incontestable. He accused General Lehéritier, whose intrepidity is so universally acknowledged, of not having charged, *as he ought to have done*, at the head of the dragoons. At the same time, he ordered General Montbrun to be cited before a court of in-

quiry, for having retired to Esonne, instead of defending Moret, and the forest of Fontainebleau. In consequence of this movement, the town of Fontainebleau fell into the power of the Austrian general Count de Hardeg, who placed the castle under his safeguard. Nemours was surrounded by a cloud of cossacks, and was compelled, after a brisk cannonade, to open its gates to the allies. Napoleon's anger was directed also against the generals who abandoned this place, without having defended it even to destruction.

His marshals themselves were not always exempt from the reproaches, which he publicly conveyed in terms of contempt and aspersion. One of them, the Duke of Belluno, had not been able to reach Montmireau on the 17th, in time to secure the bridges; he could not indeed arrive within a league of them. Ought he to have commenced an attack in the middle of the night, and before all his columns were come up? "It is a serious fault," exclaimed Buonaparte. "The occupation of the bridges at Montereau would have gained a day, and allowed me to chastise the Austrians *in flagrante delictu*." This insulting language he used in his offiicial bulletin, as if the position of Montereau, which covered the retreat of the grand allied army on the left bank of the Seine, had not been as much defended on the 17th as it was on the 18th. In the height of his choler, he took the command from the Marshal Duke of Belluno, and conferred it on General Gerard; and

the same day, in the presence of the army, he outraged the feelings of General Guyot, one of the most distinguished officers of his guard, by making him responsible for the surprise of a park of artillery, which had been carried off by the cossacks.

One could not have conceived it possible that a soldier, who had lately been and still was in such critical circumstances, would thus attempt the humiliation of his bravest officers ; for never were their talents and services more necessary to him. But since his success against the army of Silesia, his thoughts were entirely occupied by triumphs and destruction. In fact, his ancient arrogance returned to the full extent, in which it had appeared during his most prosperous days.

Every arrangement was made for attacking Montmireau on the ensuing day. The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, who commanded there, had taken a position on the heights, which overlooked the right bank of the Seine near the castle of Surville ; and his head-quarters were established on an eminence towards a mill, which is behind the village of Marolles-sur-Seine. A league in advance of Montmireau, the Wurtemberg corps was stationed with two Austrian divisions, under Count Bianchi. This position not only covered the bridges and town, but protected the retreat of the grand army ; for the Prince of Schwartzenberg had caused all the baggage and troops, forming the reserve, to advance ; and had left before Montmireau only a small force, with orders to dispute the passage of the Seine.

On the 18th at day-break, General Chateau, a young officer, full of fire and intelligence, opened the attack with that impetuosity which characterizes French valour; but not being supported, he was repulsed with loss. The intrepid general returned thrice to the charge, and was mortally wounded on the centre of the bridge, which he was crossing with the rifle-men, in the hope of turning the enemy's position; while General Gerard hastened with other divisions to renew the attack. But the allies were posted in a formidable manner, and protected by forty pieces of ordnance. General Gerard sustained the contest throughout the morning; but nothing short of a combined and general attack could carry the position. At three o'clock, Buonaparte arrived with his staff from Nangis at full gallop, and gave orders for a vigorous attack upon the plain. The French army, amounting to twenty-eight thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon, now moved from all parts; while at the same time, General Pajol, who also arrived with fresh troops by the Melun road, made a charge of cavalry on the flanks of the allies, and turned them. The onset was furious, and the allies, seeing the greater part of their artillery dismounted, fled precipitately into Montmireau, vigorously pursued by the French dragoons, while the inhabitants of the place augmented the dangers of their retreat, by firing upon them from the windows.

Annoyed by the destructive havoc of sixty

cannon, the management of which Napoleon himself superintended, the enemy had not even time to detroy the bridges; and contrary to expectation, the French obtained possession of them. The *chasseurs* of the seventh corps were the first who advanced to occupy them, by driving the enemy furiously away. The loss on the part of the vanquished army, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, was about eighteen hundred men; besides which a considerably quantity of arms, and several pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the French.

"My heart is relieved," said Napoleon. "I have saved the capital of my empire." He instantly dispatched Marshal Macdonald, at the head of the cavalry, in pursuit of the enemy; but the passage through the town of Montmireau was long and difficult, being encumbered with men and horses, which retarded the movement of the victorious army in the road to Bray; while the allies, on the contrary, had been withdrawing some time on Troyes, and could not be attacked, with any effect, during their retreat. They lost neither men, ordnance, nor equipage; the plains, that stretch from Montmireau and Bray being covered with infantry, and an immense body of horse, which protected the retrograde movement by Nogent-sur-Chapelle. The Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, on hearing that the bridges of Montereau were forced, hastily quitted Bray, where their head-quarters had been established.

Thus nothing decisive had been done: and

the victory itself had for a long time been doubtful. The dreadful cannonade, directed against the allies by Napoleon in person, had been on the point of ceasing for want of ammunition; and regret was mingled with the joy of the conqueror; perhaps because if the waggons had been better furnished, he would have seen some additional thousands of carcases heaped on the plains of Montereau. The resentment of Buonaparte now fell upon the General of Artillery, Digeon; and on the following morning, at an early hour, being then at the castle of Surville, he dictated to one of his secretaries a letter for this officer, couched in the following terms:—"A general of artillery, who has no powder in his ammunition waggons, merits death. I deliver you over to a military commission. You are unworthy of my confidence." The transmittal of this denunciation was, however, suspended; and General Sorbier, the commander in chief of the artillery, was summoned into his master's presence. "You consign my reputation to the devil," said Napoleon in an irritated tone. "There was a deficiency of powder in your waggons yeterday, and your General, Digeon, deserves to be shot. I shall cashier him, and consign him to trial by a military commission."—"Sire," replied General Sorbier, without being moved, "General Digeon is a very distinguished officer. I doubt whether the imputation made against him is true, and he merits no reproaches. You may withdraw your confidence from him, Sire; but the opinion

of the army will continue in his favour." This *trait* of noble firmness and French generosity struck the despot, and he ordered his secretary to destroy the letter. A mayor of a neighbouring town (M. S. de M) was a witness of this fact, and kindly communicated the details to the author.

On the 17th of February, the Marshal Duke of Reggio moved from Nangis on Provins, and during the night, the Austro-Russians, who were fighting as they retreated in this direction, passed through Provins in the greatest disorder. The French cavalry being too much fatigued to pursue them, their rear-guard remained in the town and its environs. It was a disastrous night for the unfortunate inhabitants of Provins, who were a prey to pillage, and exposed to the shock of two contending armies. On the following day, the French advanced-guard arrived; and after having driven the rear-guard of the enemy away, marched on Nogent, and made itself master of the course of the Seine. At the same time, Generals Charpentier and Aix debouched from Melun, traversing the forest of Fontainebleau, in pursuit of the cossacks and two Austrian brigades. On first hearing of this reverse, General Hardeg, who occupied Fontainebleau, hastily took the road to Sens.

Thus the grand allied army, which had lately menaced even the capital, was in full retreat, and appeared entirely to abandon the offensive.

On the day that the battle of Montereau was fought, fifteen hundred Austro-Russians forced the

post of Chateauneuf, two leagues from Orleans, on the Lyons road, and penetrated to the very suburbs; but they were held in check, and finally repulsed by General Chassereau, who had recently arrived from the army in Spain. The sudden retreat of the grand army also relieved Orleans; all the troops of the enemy having immediately fallen back on the roads of Burgundy and Champagne.

These different engagements, however, on the borders of the Seine, the issue of which determined the allied monarchs to retreat, can be described as nothing more than strong skirmishes. In fact, the enemy had never yet fought a single general battle with his whole collected force—not even at Brienne. It was matter of astonishment, in the camp of Napoleon, that the allies, with such a numerical superiority of troops, should make so few efforts, and be disheartened by the slightest reverses.

Never was there a change of scene more rapid or complete. Couriers continually followed each other from the army to Paris, decked with laurels and covered with mire. The populace accompanied them in succession to the Thuileries, with shouts of "Victory!" The most exaggerated accounts were, as usual, in circulation. According to these, the grand army was almost annihilated, and the Austrians had thrown down their arms. The defection of Austria was announced as certain.

The Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia, who had advanced as far as Bray, owed their escape entirely to the swiftness of their horses. To crown all, the wreck of the grand allied army was retreating in the greatest disorder; and it was doubtful whether the fugitives would be able to regain the Rhine. The war was at an end. The rapid and bold operations of Napoleon had counteracted all the designs of the enemy, and recalled to every one's mind the memorable campaigns of Italy and Germany.

However overstrained these observations might be, Napoleon had again found the secret of conquering. The troops, which he had defeated at Montmerail, Vauchamp, and Montereau, were the flower of the allied army. A great number of cannon and prisoners, as well as ten stand of colours, were the fruits of French heroism. The grand army had not been more fortunate than that of Field-Marshal Blucher. It had advanced without sufficient precaution, though for ever hesitating; and never since the opening of the campaign had Napoleon's cause been in so favourable a line of progress as now—his cause, indeed, seemed as if gained.

Public opinion is almost always guided by the fortune of arms. "Napoleon has twice saved the capital," said the Parisians: "he has saved our wives, our children, our sisters. Let us rally round him; for though he oppresses us, this is

preferable to uncertainty, pillage, anarchy, dismemberment, and disgrace, which last, true Frenchmen dread more than all."

This opinion became predominant. The hostilities had assumed, on the part of the Allies, a character of rapine and devastation, which injured their cause. Nobody had been deceived by their proclamation at Frankfort, ascribing the war to a metaphysical being, called *Preponderance;*—it was a declaration which produced in France no effect whatever.

In the midst of these vicissitudes, the people in general were still so blind as not to perceive who was the pilot that could rescue them from shipwreck; but he was plainly pointed out by the partisans of the legitimate dynasty. "Is it, then, the decree of Providence," exclaimed they, "that sovereigns, nations, and armies must be subjected to still more bitter lessons, and still further chastisement, ere they return to those eternal principles, which can alone supply the remedy of all their evils?—France has the means of her happiness within herself—the general acknowledgment of her ancient royal house. As to the Allies, let them be on their guard. Peace with Napoleon, and a consequent evacuation of France, would for ever consolidate his power, and produce the restitution of three hundred and sixty thousand French prisoners, whom he would soon employ again, as terrible instruments of his vengeance, against Vienna, Berlin and Munich."

Such were the apprehensions entertained by that portion of the community, whose only wish and object were the welfare of their native land, and the peace of the world; who regarded the confirmation of Napoleon's tyrannical sway as the heaviest of calamities, and saw no safety but in the restoration of the legitimate monarch.

CHAPTER IX.

The Allies demand an Armistice—The conditions agreed upon at the Congress of Chatillon, for the purpose of forming a preliminary Treaty of Peace—Buonaparte rejects them—Sudden re-organization of Field-Marshal Blucher's Army—It effects its junction with the Grand Allied Army at Arcis-sur-Aube—March of the French Army towards Troyes—Napoleon endeavours to separate Austria from the European league—He hastens to attack the Army of Silesia at Mery-sur-Seine—Mery destroyed by fire—The two Armies remain separated by the Seine, the one taking a direction towards the Marne, the other towards Troyes—Diversion by the Marshal Duke of Castiglione towards Franche-Comté and Switzerland—Two corps, under General Bianchi and Prince Philip of Hesse, march to the relief of the Austrian Army in the South—Napoleon re-enters Troyes—Sentence of Death passed on the Marquis de Widranges and M. de Gouault—Execution of the latter—Decree of proscription against the declared Partisans of the Legitimate Dynasty—Monsieur, the Count d'Artois, enters France—The enthusiasm displayed by the Inhabitants of Franche-Comté—His Royal Highness arrives at Vesoul.

HESITATION, a division of their forces, and a want of concert in offensive operations, had made the Allies lose nearly all the ground, which they acquired by the battle of Brienne; and they retreated more rapidly than they had advanced after their victories. The war still appeared to them uncertain, and gave rise to so much uneasiness that they, in their turn, relied upon pacific negociations. Like Napoleon, after his defeat, they acknowledged themselves, as it were, conquered, by applying for an armistice. The Austrian General, Count de Paar, made the demand, by presenting himself at the advanced posts of the French,

on the day after the battle of Montereau, and alleging that a suspension of arms would facilitate the issue of the conferences. The head-quarters were then at Montereau; and on the evening of the same day, M. de Rumigny, secretary to the cabinet, arrived from the Congress of Chatillon, with the conditions of a preliminary treaty. This proposition, transmitted to Napoleon by his plenipotentiary at the conferences, comprehended all the bases deemed necessary for the re-establishment of a political equilibrium—bases which Napoleon himself had offered but a few days before, when he believed his dynasty in imminent danger.

Although the mysteries of this celebrated negociation have never been fully brought to light, it appears certain that the proposition made to Buonaparte was France as she existed under her kings, with some little additions to her ancient limits; but still keeping within those bounds, which had heretofore secured to her so many ages of glory and prosperity. The Allied Sovereigns had adopted a firm resolution of not signing any treaty, the bases of which would fix the boundary of France upon the Rhine. All Germany was impressed with the necessity of this political principle being rigorously applied. A publication, maintaining that *the Rhine is a river of Germany, and not its frontier*, had been widely circulated; causing a great sensation at the head-quarters of the Allies, as well as the districts beyond the

Rhine. It was, however, thought just that France should also partake in the general liberty, national independence and long wished-for peace of Europe. Napoleon might, by a single word, have put a period to the sufferings of the nation; he might have restored, by peace, its colonies, its commerce, and the free exercise of its industry. Was he willing to do this? The Allied Powers offered, in a spirit of conciliation, to discuss the subject, with regard to the mutual propriety of one party or another possessing such portions of territory as did not belong to France before the war. This proposition established the principles, by which the political reconstruction of Europe was to be effected. The most important conditions were arranged by the negociators; and the points, left to the decision of the English Government, bore reference only to the French colonial possessions, which Great Britain had acquired during the long continuance of hostilities.

The proposition, nevertheless, is now indisputably proved to have contained one clause, which appeared to Bonaparte much more galling than any other condition of the treaty. This was the occupation of his capital, by the Allied Sovereigns, 'till a definitive peace should be signed within a limited time. Napoleon thought that he discovered some snare in a proposition so humiliating to his pride; though the occupation was only to be temporary. But had not he invaded the capitals of many sovereigns, after having over-run their do-

minions with his troops? Had not he required that the greater part of the kings of Europe should subscribe to debasing conditions, dictated in their own palaces? The present demand of the Allies was, therefore, only a just reprisal, and a necessary guarantee.

Such, however were the presumptuous hopes of Napoleon, that intoxicated by his late partial successes, he is said to have seized, with a mien of fury, the paper which contained the proposition of peace, exclaiming, while he tore it: "I am at this moment nearer to Vienna, than they are to Paris."

Firmly resolved not to give way, but wishing that this should by no means appear to be only his individual determination; convinced too that he should find an entire docility and additional support in the unanimous sentiments of his dignitaries, he caused a secret and extraordinary council of the Regency to be convoked at Paris, for the purpose of deliberating on the conditions, which had been agreed upon at Chalons.

A large majority of the council is stated to have been in favor of accepting the proffered terms; but Napoleon, who expected sacrifices, on the part of France, to any extent, and who flattered himself with having now nationalized the war, was indignant at the weakness of the council. Before he would consent to a peace, which thus humbled him, he resolved to attempt a separate negociation with Austria, and to try again the

fate of arms, upon which he placed much greater reliance than upon deliberations and treaties. The measures of the Allies encouraged him more and more in the hope of driving them beyond the Rhine. It was thus that Fortune betrayed him, by caresses, to the last day of his power.

The Allied Sovereigns, on their part, considered their situation as critical. Astonished at the defiance, manifested by the journalists in the pay of the tyrant, and alarmed by the attitude, which the peasants of the Brie and Champagne had assumed, they began to dread a national war, and abandoned the idea of seeking a compensation for their reverses in the hazard of a general battle. With such an enemy, who fortified himself even in the midst of disasters, and who deceived all calculation by the rapidity of his movements, a general battle might, perhaps, cause them to lose, in a single day, the fruits of all their prudence. The Allied Generals were of opinion that the rules of art should be strictly followed, as it was always dangerous to violate them; and in conformity to these, it was necessary that a respectable line of defence should be established, for the purpose of completely protecting the rear of the army from insult, securing the *dépôt* of supplies, and covering all by a sufficient force. The great Frederic recommended, in his writings, that an army should never, as he termed it, push a point too far; but this advice was forgotten during the eccentric

operations of the Marne, after the battle of Brienne.

The advantages and resources of the Allies were, however, immense. Every fortress, which fell on either side of the Rhine, augmented their means of invasion. The Oder, the Elbe, and the Rhine were become a triple line of reserve, from which they continually drew reinforcements. Were, then, two or three partial defeats sufficient seriously to dishearten the armies, raised by the Russian Empire and all Germany? The losses were, in fact, about the same on both sides; but a military spirit had regained its usual influence in the camp of Napoleon. The French soldiers, naturally of a martial turn, no longer dreaded the idea of measuring themselves with troops superior in point of numbers—they testified an ardent desire to fight and to conquer.

These great considerations could not escape the commanders of both armies. It appeared as if the confederated monarchs could not attain the object, which they had in view, but by collecting in one mass the whole force of the European league, as they had before done at Leipzig. The Rhine had been passed two months, the allied powers were now in the heart of France, yet this concentration, though so desirable, had not been effected; for at Brienne, it had only been partial. The reverses, on the Marne and at Montereau, made them, however, seriously think of it; and from the

14th to the 18th of February, formal orders were issued to effect, as soon as possible, the junction of Field-Marshal Blucher's corps with the Grand Austro-Russian army, in the neighbourhood of Troyes.

In spite of the rude attacks which it had sustained, the army of Silesia, so often represented as completely dispersed, and even annihilated, was in four days re-organized, equipped and collected. The corps of General de Sacken, General d'York, and General Kleist, marched without interruption or haste from Chalons to Troyes. They were in number about fifty thousand men, and were destined to form the right of the grand army under the Prince of Schwartzenberg. In the night of the 19th to the 20th Marshal Blucher *bivouacked* at the village of Sommesous; and on the following day, he was reinforced, near Arcis-sur-Aube, by nine thousand men of General Langeron's corps, who arrived from Vitry. The army continued its march towards Arcis, on its way to Mery-sur-Seine, where the junction was to take place. The heads of columns reached Arcis on the 20th.

At the same time, the grand army took a direction upon Troyes by Romilly and La Chapelle. All the roads were covered with large bodies of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Towards every point of the horizon, the fires of *bivouacs* illumined the face of the country. A sharp frost favored the retrograde movement of the Allies, by facilitating the transport of their ordnance and baggage

in all directions. Strong reconnoitring parties of cavalry covered the retreat.

The French army did not leave Montereau till the 20th. It then took a direction on Bray, passed through that place, and learnt that the Emperor Alexander had slept there the night before. On the whole road, the inhabitants declared that a great misunderstanding subsisted between the troops of the different nations, who formed the grand allied army. The French columns stretched along the left bank of the Seine; and on the same day halted at Nogent, where the army passed the whole of the 21st. The advanced guard, however, commanded by the Marshal Duke of Reggio, followed the enemy, who took a direction from Romilly towards Troyes. On the 22d the army left Nogent, and continued its march as far as the town of Chartres. Napoleon struck by the retreat of the Allies, and by the uniform reports made to him as he proceeded, now formed the idea that the coalition, whether from its reverses, or a difference of interests, was on the point of dissolution. Misled by his own ignorance as to the true interest of nations, he believed that he could detach Austria from the European league; and with this view addressed an urgent letter to the Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg; in which it is said that he avowed his arrogant conviction of driving the Allies beyond the Rhine.

Scarcely had he dispatched the officer with this communication, when the generals of his

advanced guard gave notice that a concentration of troops, to a large extent, appeared to be taking place at Mery-sur-Seine. Napoleon instantly determined to repair thither, and judge whether to content himself with reconnoitring, or attack the Allies. The town of Mery, which is situated on the two banks of the Seine, but principally on the right one, and is six leagues to the North-West of Troyes, was occupied by the Russian corps of General Wittgenstein; and the whole army of Field-Marshal Blucher arrived there by the road of Chalons.

Thus the junction of the two armies was effected; for in spite of Napoleon's manœuvres, in spite of the bad roads by which the troops were compelled to march, their reunion took place in the greatest order, nothing being able to damp the resolution of the allied soldiers.

Count Wittgenstein had before learnt that there was a considerable force opposed to him between Mesgrigny and Chartres. This consisted of the 7th and 9th corps, forming the advanced guard under the command of the Marshal Duke of Reggio, independent of a large body of horse. As soon as the army of Silesia had arrived, the corps of General Count de Wittgenstein took a direction on Chandrigny; and scarcely had the posts, left in front of the town, been re-occupied by the Prussian army, when Napoleon, arriving in person, ordered General Boyer to commence the attack. The Prussian battalion, which was sta-

tioned on the left bank to defend the bridge, was immediately overthrown, and driven beyond the Seine, which runs through Mery. The troops had not even time to burn the bridge which connects the two parts of the town; and the French in hot pursuit passed over it. Fire, however, immediately appeared in various parts of the town, whether by accident or design; and the sudden progress of the flames obliged the assailants to recross the Seine; but the wind blew with so much violence, that it became impossible to stop the raging element, and fulfil the intentions of preserving the town. Marshal Blucher suddenly summoned the troops from the other side of the Seine, who hastened to support his advanced posts; and set fire to the bridge. Though formed of wood, it appeared to resist the flames, and the French appeared in force to seize upon it. A Russian battalion, however, and the Prussian riflemen disputed the point, and for a long time maintained their station amidst clouds of smoke as well as showers of balls, and burning timber; the last of which, in falling, wounded and killed many. The two armies continued a fire of musquetry on each other from opposite banks of the river, while the unfortunate town of Mery was a prey to the flames. So rapid was their progress, that Marshal Blucher could not cause the detachment to be supported, which was defending the bridge, and, consequently, three French battalions succeeded in effecting their passage, it being only half consumed.

The riflemen approached within five hundred paces of the Field-Marshal, who was reconnoitring the position, surrounded by his staff. They fired at the gallant veteran, wounded Colonel Valentine, and struck the Marshal himself with a spent ball, which caused a slight contusion of the leg. Blucher now opposed to the three French battalions some squadrons of cavalry, and a detachment of horse-artillery. He also immediately provided against any general attack by placing his whole army, in battle array and in two lines, upon a vast plain beyond the river; having his cavalry in reserve, to profit by any advantage, which the French might offer, if they attempted the passage with a considerable force. Napoleon, however, caused his troops to stretch along the left bank of the Seine, and commenced a firing, which was apparently brisk, but only intended to protect the three battalions, which had ventured beyond the river. Not being really supported, they were attacked, driven into the town amidst the flames, and forced precipitately to retire over the bridge, which was now nearly destroyed — a perilous retreat, in the course of which many soldiers were drowned, others killed by the enemy, and others, principally wounded, made prisoners.

At sun set the two armies, separated by the Seine, *bivouacked*, and guarded their respective positions; reciprocally accusing each other of having set fire to Mery. This lamentable conflagration was, in reality, caused by the imprudence of some

soldiers, and the violence of the wind, without any manifest intention of reducing the town to ashes. Every thing seemed to indicate that a general battle was now at hand; but Napoleon hesitated as to venturing beyond the Seine against Field-Marshal Blucher's whole army, and thought it more desirable to push the mass of his force towards Troyes; while, on the part of the Allies, the new dispositions, which had emanated from the councils of the Sovereigns, caused another separation of the two armies to be forthwith decided upon.

From this arrangement it was inferred that the commanders in chief of the coalition had not found, in the vicinity of Troyes, a field of battle, possessing the advantages they wished; but this supposition is ridiculous and inadmissible. Their new separation arose, no doubt, from the continued wish not to leave the destiny of the world dependant upon the issue of a single battle. Such had been the constant feeling of the Allied Sovereigns, and a guide to the different movements of the troops. Under existing circumstances too, it became of the highest importance to rally, in a compact mass, all the reinforcements which arrived from the North and the Rhine, in order to create a powerful diversion on the Marne, or beyond it; and frustrate the designs of the Marshal Duke of Castiglione, who had assumed an imposing attitude, with twelve thousand men and a large train of artillery. General Marchand entered Cham-

bery; General Meussnier re-occupied Macon; General Desaix pushed his columns under the walls of Geneva; Bourg and Nantua were retaken; and the Duke of Castiglione, with the bulk of his army, which was composed of picked men, began to put himself in motion towards Franche Comté and Switzerland. General Count Bubna fell back on every point before superior numbers, and his situation appeared so critical, that Napoleon in his bulletin, dated from Montereau, exclaimed: "The Vosges, Franche, Comté, and Alsace will not forget what is due from Frenchmen, when the Allies are flying. The Duke of Castiglione is in full march, with a chosen army, to cut off the enemy's retreat."

In fact it was Napoleon's plan, at this time, to place himself between the grand army and its communications, towards the frontier of the Rhine; thus forcing the Allies to adopt a precipitate and disastrous retreat. As affairs were situated, he seemed to have the greatest interest in being nearer to Marshal Augereau; and consequently in drawing towards the South between Switzerland and the Yonne. The Duke of Castiglione seemed again, as at Leipzig, to appear when Buonaparte most wanted his assistance.

The Emperor of Austria, who was uneasy at this manœuvre, easily persuaded the Allied Sovereigns to detach an Austrian corps of twelve thousand men, under General Bianchi, towards Lyons without delay. The different corps, which were in

advance of Dijon, were by this measure placed under the same officer, as well as the first corps of reserve, commanded by Prince Philip of Hesse, which was near Basle.

The concentration of these troops was necessary, for the purpose of establishing and securing the communication between the army of the South, and the grand Austro-Russian army of the East; but the separation, to such an extent, weakened the Allied force, at the very time that Napoleon was marching upon it, either to cause uneasiness as to its communications, or to give battle.

It will be shortly seen, however, that he was induced to abandon this design by the unexpected diversion of the Silesian army on the Marne—a diversion of the most powerful and decisive nature. Napoleon, neglecting to pass the Seine for the purpose of attacking this army, then assembled at Mery, contented himself with leaving a corps of observation before it, under the command of the Marshal Duke of Reggio, who advanced to Sezanne, while Buonaparte in person, with the main body of the army, accompanied his movement on Troyes. His entry into the ancient capital of Champagne appeared to him a desirable step towards confirming public opinion in his favour, and nationalizing the war.

His head-quarters had been at the castle of Chartres during the attack of Mery. On the following day (viz. the 23d of February) he received there Prince Wenzel-Lichtenstein, who was the bearer of an answer from the Generalissimo Prince

of Schwartzenberg to the letter, which Napoleon had sent on the preceding day. Prince Wenzel manifested pacific intentions, and testified, as Count de Paar had done, the greatest desire that an armistice should be concluded, as the only means of promptly attaining peace.

Napoleon inferred from this circumstance that depression of spirits, and disunion of sentiment reigned among the allies; he therefore rejected every proposal, and pursued his advantages. On the same day, almost all the corps of his army took the direction of Troyes. That of the Marshal Duke of Reggio repaired to Megrigny, and that of the Marshal Duke of Tarentum to Pavillon; while the corps of General Gerard, which had marched from Montereau on Sens, arrived by Villeneuve-l'Archeveque, Villemont, and Saint Liebaud, that is to say, by the direct road from Sens to Troyes. Prince Maurice of Lichtenstein was stationed with his division upon this road. General Gerard encountered his rear guard, and caused it some loss; but the Austrian division was soon supported by the third corps, under the orders of General Count de Giulay.

On the other hand, large bodies of French cavalry appeared upon the heights of Pavillon; but were kept in check by the cavalry of the allies, under the command of Baron de Frimont, who, on the same evening, repelled a slight attack between the Gres and Troyes. The retreat of the allies was effected in complete order; and an eye,

in any degree experienced, perceived a movement of troops, but not a flight. The inhabitants of Troyes saw the Russian and Prussian guards spurn from them, with anger, the branches of laurel which usually adorned their caps and helmets; execrating a retreat thus undertaken without trying the issue of a battle.

The whole army evacuated the city of Troyes; while a rear-guard of two thousand men was charged with the office of retarding Napoleon's progress, and protecting the retreat.

Two French armies now appeared under the walls of Troyes, investing it, and deploying on the adjacent heights. The rear-guard of the enemy still occupied the city; and its advanced posts fell back on the suburbs, after a charge of cavalry, which advanced by the Sens road, and some firing of musketry. The allied generals dispatched an officer to Napoleon, who was instructed to ask that the night might be allowed for the evacuation of the place, and to promise that, on the succeeding morning, at six o'clock, the gates should be opened. Buonaparte rejected a demand, which tended to save an interesting city. All that could be obtained of him was a promise that no bombs should be thrown into the place; but his ferocious joy was soon displayed in the midst of a horrible cannonade directed against the suburbs, during which he exclaimed: "Now we shall see!"

Till the present period Troyes had remained tranquil, and awaited its destiny with resignation; but when, at five o'clock, the sight of the assailing

columns and the cannonade announced to the inhabitants that they were besieged, anxiety and alarm universally spread their influence. Every one ran to the cellars, and other subterraneous places for shelter. The allies, perceiving that it was Napoleon's object to carry the place by main force, threw shells into three of the suburbs, and in less than an hour the flames spread with such fury, that the trains could not advance near enough to act effectually. There were only three or four pieces of ordnance, which, after being circuitously conveyed, were able to approach the fortifications. At close of day, the French quartered themselves in the suburbs, which had been surrendered, and risked three successive attacks on the city, which were repulsed by General Wolkmann's brigade, forming the rear-guard within Troyes itself; while the divisions of Count Glulay and the Prince of Lichtenstein fell back towards Bar-sur-Seine. The besiegers attempted, during the night, to break open one of the gates, and carry a weak quarter by assault; but they were constantly repulsed. At break of day, the rear-guard of the enemy began its retreat, carrying away all its artillery and baggage. At this moment Prince Wenzel approached the French advanced posts, having left the allied sovereigns on the preceding day. He was conducted to Napoleon, whom he besought to halt a few hours before he entered Troyes, in order to spare the city. The Austrian general, at the same time, conveyed from the Emperor Francis, his

ardent wish for a speedy termination of their differences. Buonaparte promised that he would not enter Troyes till noon; but the Austrian envoy had hardly left his head-quarters, when he penetrated by a gate, which the inhabitants opened to him, and pushing his troops, possessed himself of the interior. A slight engagement took place with some posts, which hastily retired; and at the instigation of Napoleon's agents, the populace, armed with knives, hatchets, and forks, fell on the last little body of the allies, and slaughtered several Bavarians:

Under these sanguinary auspices, the conqueror made his entry into Troyes at eight o'clock. His eyes flashed with anger, and anticipated vengeance. He was still on horseback, when, perceiving a commissary of police, whom he knew by the dress, he called in a menacing tone: "There are five persons here, who have worn the cross of St. Louis,"—"Your Majesty is misinformed," said the Commissary, "there are only two." "Who are they?"—"The Marquis de Widranges, and M. de Gouault."—"What is their character?"—"Sire, I never heard any thing amiss of them."—"Let them be arrested instantly."

One victim only had remained in the oppressor's power—this was the unfortunate De Gouault, who had rejected the advice of his friends, when they conjured him to fly. Nothing could persuade him to separate himself from his wife—he adored her—he owed his fortune to her—the idea of leav-

ing her at such a time appeared more terrible than death itself. At one moment, when danger approached, and his friends, supported by his father-in-law (who was infirm and eighty years old) urged his departure, he wavered and almost consented; but his wife, overpowered by distress, even to convulsions, and shedding a flood of tears, exclaimed: "What will become of me if you forsake me?" From that moment no earthly influence could persuade him to leave her. He indulged a hope too that Napoleon would wish, from motives of policy, to leave France and the rest of Europe in ignorance of a party's existence at Troyes, which had loudly avowed its sentiments in favour of the legitimate dynasty. Such was the blindness of a man who, formerly, on hearing that the Duke d'Enghien was arrested, had the courage to offer his head if the life of that prince might be spared. The *gens d'armes* soon appeared, seized him, and conducted him before a military commission at the Hotel-de-Ville, which proceeded to try, or properly speaking, to condemn him. Scarcely had an hour elapsed when an officer appeared, caused the doors to be opened, and demanded to know whether sentence was pronounced. "The court is proceeding to judgment," was the reply. "Let him be shot directly," replied the officer. "It is the Emperor's command." The unfortunate Gouault was condemned, and universal regret prevailed through the city. The owner of the house, which Buonaparte had fixed upon for the quarters of himself and his

staff, obeying only the impulse of a generous heart, ventured to solicit an audience, and obtained it. "Sire," said M. Duchatel, "a day of triumph should be a day of clemency. I implore your Majesty to favour the whole city of Troyes by granting pardon to one of its inhabitants, who is condemned to die."—"Begone!" replied the tyrant with a ferocious air. "You forget that you are in *my* house."

At the same time, the gentleman was ordered into his presence, at whose house the Emperor of Russia had lodged, and whose wife (Madame Bourgeois) had retired to Langres at the approach of the army. Napoleon, on his entrance, assailed him with invectives, and accompanied them with the most gross and insulting observations as to his lady, whose conduct was irreproachable, and reputation unsullied, "You are a lucky man," said Buonaparte, "in neither being a nobleman nor an emigrant. Had that been the case, you should have been shot before the expiration of an hour, as Gouault shall be."

It was eleven o'clock when this unfortunate man left the Hotel-de-Ville, escorted by the *gens d'armes*, and carrying, attached to his person, a paper, on which was written in large characters, "A TRAITOR TO THE COUNTRY." This was legible by the light of flambeaux, which accompanied the sad, afflicting procession. It moved towards the usual place of criminal executions, where an attempt was made to cover the victim's eyes. He

refused this, however, saying with a firm voice that he knew how to die for his king. He himself gave the grenadiers a signal to fire, and breathed forth his last sigh, while uttering "Long live the King! long live Louis XVIII!"

Be the cowardly creatures, who sat as judges, and inflicted on this worthy man the useless vengeance of an implacable tyrant, for ever despised and detested! Stupefaction and terror were visible in the appearance of all. The foolish populace alone exhibited a ferocious hilarity at again beholding their master and their scourge. On the same day, he issued a decree of proscription and death upon all Frenchmen, who wore the emblems or decorations of the ancient dynasty; and against all those who, whether in a military, or any other capacity, were ascertained to have accompanied the hostile army in the invasion of the Empire. Nothing could satisfy the despot's thirst for blood, though it was natural that the consideration of his own interest might have some effect; since the conduct, which he now pursued, was sure to alienate the regard of his subjects more and more.

The same tribunal, which condemned the unfortunate Gouault, passed a similar sentence on the Marquis de Widranges, accompanied by a confiscation of his property. In the eyes of Napoleon, he was still more culpable than the victim about to be immolated. It was the Marquis de Widranges, who, on the approach of the allies, advised the inhabitants to hoist the white flag upon the

towers, and caused a thousand copies of the king's proclamation to be printed, which he himself publicly distributed. No one in the whole province was ignorant that he had been at the head of a deputation, which intreated of the Emperor Alexander the re-establishment of the legitimate monarchy. The endeavours to gain possession of his person were fruitless; his mission to Monsieur, the brother of the king, having conveyed him beyond the reach of danger.

Monsieur had received him with all the kindness and condescension, which characterize the princes of his illustrious family. At the moment that his most zealous partizans were proscribed, his Royal Highness appeared as if brought to France for their protection, and guided by a Power superior to man.

Franche-Compté was loud in its acclamations, and gave the happy signal, which was soon re-echod from the Pyrennees, and the borders of the Garonnne.

Monsieur, accompanied by Count François d'Escars, Count de Wals, Count de Trogolf, Count Melchior de Polignac, and the Marquis de Widranges, left Switzerland on the 19th of February, and entered France by Pontarlier, taking the direction of Vesoul. Although no declaration had been made by the European league in favour of the exiled family, and a shyness prevailed as to sanctioning the adoption of the white cockade on their line of operations, the inhabitants of Pon-

tarlier and its neighbourhood, nevertheless, openly declared themselves, and mounted the emblem dear to the French nation,

A general, uniform, and irresistible attraction was beginning to operate upon France, drawing her towards the long-lost object of her regrets and wishes,—towards that order of things, under which so many generations of the French had lived in peace and happiness,—towards that ancient monarchy, the downfal of which had broken the social chain, and shaken the common basis upon which all legitimate thrones were erected.

On the first day of his entry into France, Monseigneur the Count d'Artois travelled thirty two leagues into the dominions of his august ancestors. In every city, town, village, and hamlet his Royal Highness was saluted with loud acclamations of joy, and cries of "Long live Louis the Eighteenth! Long live the Bourbons!" On his way to Vesoul, the enthusiasm manifested itself with a degree of impetuosity, which nothing could controul. The women, children, and old men kissed the hand and dress of the Prince. All were struck by his affability of manner, and dignified condescension. Tears of delight flowed from every eye, and a sensation of transport, not to be described, irradiated every countenance. Old men and women fell at the feet of his Royal Highness, and exclaimed, "We die content, for we are allowed the happiness of again beholding our lawful rulers, who have ever lived in our hearts." All

rushed forward to embrace the knees of Monsieur, and with torrents of tears said: "We can only offer you our hearts: the monster has left us nothing more."

When his Royal Highness approached Vesoul, the entire population of the town came out to meet him; and in order to behold at their ease the august brother of their king, they immediately asked the gentlemen of his suite to express their humble wish, that his Royal Highness would enter the place on foot. The shouts of the populace, the homage of the higher ranks, and the tears of all were intermingled, so as to render this spectacle one of the most affecting which France had produced during her long series of misfortunes.

Thus did one of the descendants of that worthy monarch, Henry the Fourth, after having been so long proscribed, exiled, and abandoned, re-enter the country which had once been so prosperous under the sceptre of his family, but which was still groaning under the pressure of a sanguinary usurpation. He arrived alone, without troops to support him, and unknown to the French, but he was encircled by the surest safe-guard, universal respect and regard; he breathed, as it were, an amiable beneficence, inspiring that sacred sensation of honour, which had heretofore been the characteristic of French chivalry, and which, though almost extinguished, was now about to revive.

The noble feeling would have spread through

all the provinces of the East, had not the views of the allied powers been so uncertain as to the august banished family; which made even the most zealous royalists afraid to declare themselves. Was not the silence of the Allies the best protection of Buonaparte? Had not his plenipotentiary been admitted to the Congress? Were not the negotiations actively proceeding? Was there not an interchange of couriers every day? The least fortuitous event might produce peace with the oppressor of France; nay, this peace was even probable. It was under such auspices, that the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom came to reclaim the inheritance of his ancestors,—it was at the same moment that Napoleon, after having repulsed the allied armies, and resumed the offensive, entered the city of Troyes, an enraged conqueror,—it was at the same moment that he proscribed, and condemned to death, the most faithful servants of the throne.

Thus every circumstance appeared to militate against the rights of legitimacy—every circumstance appeared to stifle and suppress the salutary impulse, which could alone deliver France. Nothing, therefore, could for the present be expected from human exertion; but every thing might be hoped from that invisible Power, which distributes crowns, and compassionates the suffering of nations, long exposed to the greatest calamities.

CHAPTER X.

Retreat of the Austro-Russian Grand Army towards Chaumont and Langres—It is followed by the French—March of the Silesian Army from the Aube to the Marne—Napoleon remains four days stationary at Troyes—Digression on this subject—Conferences at Lusigny—Field-Marshal Blucher menaces Meaux, and passes the Marne at Ferte-sous-Jouarre—March of the two armies, under Generals Bulow and Wintzingerode, from Belgium to the Aisne, for the purpose of joining the Silesian army—Belgium is released from the domination of Napoleon—The northern frontier of France is passed—Death of General Rusca before Soissons—That town is sacked by the Russians—Napoleon puts himself in motion to attack the army of Silesia—He confers on Marshal Macdonald the command of the troops upon the Seine and the Aube—Expedition beyond the Marne—Soissons retaken by the Allies—Battle of Craonne—Description of Laon, occupied by the army of Field-Marshal Blucher—Battle of Laon—Check of the French army—Napoleon retires towards the Aisne, and declares the position of Laon to be impregnable.

WHILE such happy presages resounded through Franche-Compté, the grand Austro-Russian army evacuated the whole country between the Seine and the Yonne; and continuing its retrograde movement, fell back on Vandœuvres and Chaumont. On the 24th of February the head-quarters were removed from Lusigny to Bar-sur-Aube, and on the following day to Colombay. The corps of Generals Wrede and Wittgenstein took the same road, while that of General Count Guilay marched between Chatillon and Bar-sur-Seine. The Russian guards arrived, at the same time, in the neighbourhood of Langres; and Prince Maurice of Lichtenstein's corps took a direction towards

Dijon, in order to join the Austrian army of the south. This retreating movement extended to all the divisions of the grand army; whose reserve arrived at Basle, and whose heads of columns touched on Vesoul.

The French army followed the corps of the enemy during their combined retreat. Near Bar-sur-Seine, the tenth corps of cavalry, commanded by Count de Valeny, found the rear-guard of General Giulay at Saint-Paar, and compelled it to hasten its march. General Gerard, supported by the Duke of Reggio, passed the Barce, over the bridges of the Guillotiere at Lusigny; and General Duhesme took a position at Montieramey, near Vandœuvres.

But at this moment, when the Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg attracted the whole attention of the French army, Field-Marshal Blucher began the execution of a plan, by which offensive warfare was about to be renewed, on the part of the Allies, with renovated vigour.

Having perceived that since the 23d of February, Napoleon had caused his main army, with all its artillery and baggage, to file towards Troyes, Blucher stole a march upon him; and advancing from Mery, reached Draus-Saint-Basle, where he threw three bridges of boats over the Aube on the 24th near Baudemont, and caused all his troops to pass in a few hours, without being perceived by any of the French corps. On the following day, the Silesian army *bivouacked* at Anglure, taking a

direction towards Sezanne, where the Marshal Duke of Ragusa's corps of observation was stationed, consisting of ten thousand men, infantry and cavalry.

This movement was likely to decide the fate of the campaign; yet Napoleon remained, nevertheless, stationary at Troyes, though he might, since the morning of the 25th, have rapidly marched on the right bank of the Seine, turned the enemy at his position of Mery, and inclosed him between the Seine and the Aube, causing Arcis to be occupied by a considerable force, and thus making it impossible for Field-Marshal Blucher to debouch. The Prussian veteran would, in this case, have been obliged to pass the Aube in sight of the French army, and to march by cross roads on Sezanne, as his only point of retreat; so that some decisive advantage over him might naturally have been expected.

This fault deserves to be severly animadverted upon, while examining the particulars of so memorable a campaign; yet indecision was by no means the character of Buonaparte. He was prompt in his resolutions, and always active in his movements, but being placed between two retreating armies, he was probably embarrassed as to a choice of pursuit. He kept his head quarters at Troyes, perhaps persuading himself that something favorable to his views might result from the negociations, which now began to assume a more pacific appearance. It was to accelerate these that Count

Flahant, his aide-de-camp met at Lesigny, Count Ducca, aide-de-camp to the Emperor of Austria; Count Schouwaloff, aide-de camp to the Emperor of Russia; and General Rauch, colonel of engineers in the service of the King of Prussia. The object of the conference was to treat as to the conditions, on which an armistice might take place for fifteen days.

These appearances of peace can alone account for the inaction of Napoleon at Troyes from the 24th to the 27th of February, or the singular position of his army, which formed at this time a line extending to Bar-sur-Aube; so that the enemy might manœuvre, as he liked, on either of the French flanks.

The most enlightened officers of our army, who were now occupying a town lately in the possession of the confederated sovereigns for three weeks, remarked, as a singularity, that no positive information could be acquired as to the intention of those monarchs respecting the government of Napoleon. According to some vague reports, the Allies seemed to be inclined towards a support of the Regency, provided either a revolution, or any other fortuitous event were to overturn Buonaparte's power.

The common report of the army, however, was that the Allies were completely routed; having only the wreck of an army left, with which it would be difficult to recross the Rhine. The French soldiers were also persuaded that Nor-

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mandy, Brittany, Paris, and the armies of Spain would send reinforcements of two hundred thousand men, and that all France was in arms.

The inhabitants of Troyes perceived, nevertheless, that the army of Napoleon was far from being as strong as at the period of its disastrous retreat towards Nogent-sur-Seine; but it was scarcely possible to form a just estimate of the troops it employed at different points. This was a mystery, which none but Napoleon himself could solve; for even his own marshals were left in utter ignorance as to his aggregate force. To envelope this in still more complete darkness, he caused all the ancient establishments to be retained; so that his lists contained the names of four hundred thousand men, while several battalions consisted merely of officers; and others, by their extreme diminution, contained almost as many officers as privates. In addition to this *finesse*, a pompous enumeration was constantly made of the troops, by which the army was to be augmented in Champagne.

From Troyes, therefore, only eighty thousand men departed to pursue a hundred thousand in the direction of the Aube and Seine. General Duhesme, however, immediately wrested Bar-sur-Aube from the Austrian corps of Count Giulay. The Marshal Duke of Reggio, General Gérard, and the 10th corps of cavalry occupied this place and its environs. Marshal Macdonald removed his head-quarters to Mussy-l'Eveque, and his ad-

vanced posts to Chatillon, taking a direction, at the same time towards Ferté-sur-Aube, and Clairvaux. Marshal Ney posted himself at Arcis-sur-Aube, and the Duke of Padua remained at Nogent-sur-Seine.

But the French army followed that of the Allies with some caution, and Buonaparte, perceiving at length that the flank movement of Marshal Blucher was connected with the apparent retreat of the Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg, suspended the march of his columns.

In fact, while Napoleon's cavalry was pushing towards Chatillon and Glairvaux, Field-Marshal Blucher was marching on Sezance with the whole of his collected army, in pursuit of the Marshal Duke of Ragusa. This commander immediately retired towards Ferté-Gaucher, and Rebais, under continual apprehension of being overwhelmed by a superior force, but he succeeded in effecting his retreat in good order, and almost without loss; General Korf, with a thousand horse, not having executed, with sufficient promptitude, the order, which he received, to turn the French corps. Field-Marshal Blucher pursued it; and learnt, at Rebais, that Marshal Mortier, with the national guards, had left Chateau-Thierry; where he was stationed to observe the right bank of the Marne, for the purpose of hastily joining the Duke of Ragusa at Ferté-sur-Jouarre.

The troops of the two marshals amounted to

sixteen or twenty thousand men. To pass the Marne in their presence was a delicate operation, especially as Buonaparte, knowing the direction which the army of Silesia had taken, would probably detach a corps to act upon his flanks. Blucher made the following arrangements, however, without any hesitation. He ordered Generals Sacken and Langeron to take a direction upon Coulommiers and Chailly, and thence pursue their march upon Meaux. At the same time he commanded Generals Kleist and York to move from Rebais on Ferté-sous-Jouarre. General Korf, with a reserve of three thousand horse, formed the rear-guard. The demonstration towards Meaux answered the purpose of the Field-Marshal. The two French Marshals, who had formed a junction at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, precipitately abandoned that place, and hastened to the relief of Meaux, thus leaving to the enemy the means of throwing bridges over the Marne in front of Ferté. A hundred Prussian *chasseurs* immediately passed in small craft, and seized the town—a passage, which might have been effected at Meaux or Tréport, the army of Silesia being equally prepared to cross the river at one point or the other.

The bridges of boats were now thrown over the river at Ferté-sous-Jouarre; but it required two hours to complete them; so that the corps of Marshal Marmont and Mortier had time to concentrate at Meaux.

The army of Silesia, however, being now in

possession of both banks of the Marne, found itself enabled to effect a junction with the formidable forces, which arrived from the North by Laon, Rheims, and Chalons. These were the two corps of General Wintzingerode and Bulow, whose spirited march from Belgium to the Marne we are about briefly to trace.

Nothing could more indisputably prove that France was groaning beneath a tyranny as disastrous as intolerable, than the fact that her Northern frontiers, which were defended by places of such strength as to be almost impregnable, were all at once abandoned, and thrown open, as it were, to the Allies, who was thence enabled to penetrate into the heart of the empire. No force, in fact, disputed their progress; but they were, nevertheless, obliged to penetrate through a long line of fortifications, and brave a martial population, who might arm, and cause this enterprise to end in the confusion of the enemy.

The plan of this sudden invasion consisted in General Bulow's corps neglecting all the fortified Flemish places, observing only Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp with a force inferior in number to the garrisons of those towns, and thus to pass the bounds of ancient France at Avesne and Vervins. As to the Russian General Wintzingerode, after having left Juliers, Vanloo, and Maestricht, he was also to neglect the fortified places of the Ardennes, such as Montmedi, Charlemont, Givet, Philipville, Rocroy, and Mazieres, and arrive, in

like manner, by his right on Avesne, and by his left on Rethel. This audacious march was to be effected too in the depth of winter, and by roads deemed impassable; while it became also necessary to avoid the French garrison, which put themselves in motioh for the purpose of alarming and harassing the invaders.

Nothing, however, could retard the march of the two allied Generals. Lieutenant General Baron Wintzingerode arrived at Namur on the 24th of January, and halted at this place, for the purpose of collecting and giving instructions to his columns. On the 5th of February he published a proclamation, promising to respect every one's person and property; and on leaving the town, pursued his way to Avesnes. General Czernicheff, who commanded his avanced guard, shortly afterwards took possession of Dinant and Philippeville.

At the same time, General Count Woronzow, after having passed the Rhine at Cologne, also took the direction of Namur, and thence marched on Rethel, where he came in contact with General Strogonoff. Almost the whole of this frontier was favorably disposed towards the Allies. A Prussian officer, Baron de Falkenhausen, who was a colonel of cavalry, moved on Arlon, and then pushed as far as Namur and Liege, to cut off all the resources which Napoleon derived from the districts of the Sambre and Meuse. He released a considerable number of conscripts, and proceeded even to the borders of Luxembourg and the Ar-

dennes. At his approach, the inhabitants of Luxembourg rose, amidst acclamations of: "Long live the Allies! Death to the French!" They marched in front of the Prussians and Russians with flags and provisions, more than sixty villages partaking in this insurrection.

Lieutenant General Wintzingerode found, on his arrival at Avesnes, several pieces of brass ordnance, as well as arms and ammunition. He fixed his head-quarters here at the beginning of February, and loftily announced that he was on his way to Laon; from which place he should march on Paris. At the same time, his left columns took the roads of Vervins and Meziéres, penetrated to Rethel, and proceeded towards Rheims. This city opened its gates to a hundred and fifty cossacks; after which the whole Russian advanced guard arrived. General Czernicheff, being thus master of Rheims, marched with four to five thousand light troops to Soissons, and summoned that place to surrender.

Situated in a cheerful and fertile valley on the river Aisne; at the distance of eight leagues from Laon, and thirteen from Rheims, Soissons, one of the most ancient cities of France, but now decayed, hardly contains eight thousand souls. It is without fortifications; and no works defend even the approach to it; so that it is hardly capable of resisting a *coup-de-main*. Buonaparte thought its position nevertheless, important, on account of the bridge over the Aisne; a point, at which almost all the great roads from the North to Paris concentrate. This bar-

rier once forced, there was no further obstacle to prevent a junction of the forces coming from the North, with the army of Silesia, manœuvring on the Marne. A thousand of the National Guards and two or three hundred regulars were collected at Soissons ; which troops, as well as the defence of the city, Napoleon had confided to General Rusca, a Piedmontese by origin, an intrepid and ardent officer, devoted to his master's interest ever since the campain in Italy. Animated by his zeal and by his instructions, Rusca rejected every summons, and swore to defend the place while he had life. He caused the houses to assume a fortified appearance, formed a battery of sixteen cannon, and ranged his national guards in order of battle. Thus, Soissons was destined to experience the same fate as Sens and Nogent-sur-Seine, precisely at the same period that the disastrous defence of those two places occurred.

On the 13th of February, after a vigorous engagement on the road from Laon to Soissons, Czernicheff forced the garrison to re-enter the city. On the following day, General Wintzingerode himself attacked Soissons from both sides of the Aisne. He erected a battery, consisting of twelve cannon, and one of the first shot struck General Rusca, who did not survive his wound above an hour. His death caused the courage of the inhabitants to flag, and decided the fate of their city. The troops, overwhelmed by a superior force, took to flight, and sought refuge in the houses, pursued and press-

ed by the Russians, who entered at the same time. Combats ensued in the streets, and many of the citizens were killed in the fray. Soissons, thus taken by assault, and filled with terror, was delivered for six hours to the pillage and brutal rage of the soldiery. General Lonchamp, three colonels, and twelve to fifteen hundred men laid down their arms ; and all the artillery fell into the hands of the conquerors. The Russians however, did not remain more than thirty hours at Soissons, and then pursued their march to Epernay. The victories of Buonaparte at Montmirail and Chateau-Thierney, decided Wintzingerode, on the 15th of February to make a sudden retreat on the Rheims road. The Marshal Duke of Treviso reoccupied Soissons on the 19th and reorganized the defence of the city ; but this check obscured the success of Napoleon on the Marne, and in his fury he ordered the general, who succeeded Rusca, to be tried before a Council of War, declaring that "*Soissons ought not to have been taken.*"

Such was the march of General Wintzingerode's corps on the Aisne, and towards the Marne. That of General Bulow's corps, in the same direction, was not less bold, and still more rapid. After having driven the French troops into Antwerp, by a combined attack with an English division, under the command of Sir Thomas Graham, General Bulow took a position near this important place, in order to commence a regular attack. This was fixed by the two generals for the 2d of February ;

but the precautions, taken by the French for the defence of their fleet, had secured both the city and the men of war. The garrison too were full of courage, and the works in the best state. The new governor, General Carnot, arrived on the morning of the 2d of February, and immediately took upon himself the general direction of affairs. The enemy made a vigorous attack on the outer works with all his collected force; but the resistance was still more determined. The Allies were repulsed at all points, after sustaining a great loss in killed and wounded. The fleet remained untouched during the bombardment except one vessel, called the Cæsar, which was somewhat damaged. On the same day, General Bulow received positive orders to march towards the South, with the corps under his command, for the purpose of acting in concert with the grand allied army. The siege of Antwerp was, therefore, converted into a blockade, which was undertaken by the English division, and six thousand Saxons.

On the 3d of January, General Bulow took the direction of Malines, in conformity to his instructions, and entered that place on the 5th. His advanced guard immediately penetrated to Vilvorde, while another column marched from Oudenarde to Ghent. The French troops had evacuated Brussels on the 2d of February and the cossacks entered it on the same day. It was in vain that General Maison, an active, brave and experienced officer, commanded a French corps in the

North. He had too small a body of troops, and found himself under the necessity of abandoning Brabant to its fate, for the purpose of covering the ancient frontier, and securing the safety of the garrisons. Besides, the opinion of the Belgians seemed absolutely hostile towards the French; for at Malines, Brussels, and almost all the towns of Brabant, the inhabitants received the Allies with every demonstration of joy. A deputation from Ghent presented the keys of that place to General Bulow, and the Allies spread wider and wider into Belgium; while French-Flanders, agitated by intestine commotions, was overrun, in the strictest sense of the word, by three or four thousand refractory conscripts, who possessed themselves of the country between Lisle, Armentieres, and Bailleul, cutting off all the communication with Dunkirk.

Thus, all Belgium was wrested from the domination of Buonaparte, Antwerp excepted; and the Prince of Saxe-Weimar, commander in chief of the northern combined army, fixed his head quarters at Brussels.

Meanwhile, General Bulow, pushing his advanced posts in the direction of Mons, marched by Hainault in Piccardy, to form a communication with the Russian corps under General Wintzingerode, which was penetrating through the districts of Laon, Soissons, and Champagne.

The barriers of the North were now passed. On the 14th of February General Bulow entered

Avesne; and afterwards seized on La Fère, in which he found considerable magazines, and a *dépôt* of artillery. On the 26th he occupied the town of Laon, and there effected his junction with Baron de Wintzingerode. On the following day, they marched together towards Soissons, for the purpose of joining Field-Marshal Blucher, then stationed with his entire army on the two banks of the Marne between Chateau-Thierry and Meaux. At this time too, a detachment of light troops, commanded by Colonel Tettenborn, and belonging to the corps of General Wintzingerode, had passed the Marne, and pursued their way to Fère-Champenoise only ten leagues from the Aube.

Vitry, Chalons, Epernay, and Ferté-sous-Jouarre were in the power of Field-Marshal Blucher, whose army thus occupied forty leagues of the Marne from its source to Meaux. The French advanced posts having abandoned the side of the river opposite to Tréport, General Sacken removed his head-quarters thither; while strong reconnoitring parties of cavalry, moving in the rear of the army and in all directions, prevented the possibility of surprise. The Russian advanced guard, belonging to General Sacken's corps, was posted in the suburbs of Meaux, on the left bank, at a bridge leading from the town on the road to Nangis, which the French commanders had injured during their retreat. Some of General Sacken's scouts had even advanced to Lagny.

Thus was Paris seriously menaced for the

third time. Wounded soldiers and fugitives arrived in crowds. Anxiety and agitation again took possession of every one's mind; and the sycophants of the court now contented themselves with the mien of affected security.

Several couriers from Meaux and Paris having acquainted Napoleon with the public ideas as to impending danger, he resolved, on the 27th of February, to quit Troyes, and fall rapidly on the rear of Field-Marshal Blucher's army, for the purpose of repeating, if possible, the manœuvres of Champeaubert and Montmirail. This operation appeared to be the more necessary and urgent, because the conferences at Lusigny, respecting a suspension of hostilities for fifteen days, had failed. It had been found impracticable to agree upon a line of demarkation. Such was the confidence of Buonaparte and his partisans as to the issue of the war, that his aide-de-camp, Flahault, said to the Austrian General Ducca at one of the conferences: "Another defeat like that of Montereau, and I will lay a wager that you are driven beyond the Rhine."

All the efforts of Napoleon were exerted towards this object. In moving with such celerity upon the Marne, he meant again to emancipate the metropolis, and likewise, above all, to prevent the junction of the corps under Generals Wintzingerode and Bulow, with the main army of Silesia; which, by this additional force, would amount to almost a hundred thousand fighting men, and consequent-

ly would experience no further obstacle to its enterprizes.

When Buonaparte left Troyes on the 27th, with his guard, he dispatched his aide-de-camp, Count Arthur de Labourdeny, to Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum ; placing at the disposal of the latter the two corps, commanded by the Duke of Reggio and General Gerard. With this force, united to his own, the Marshal received orders to use every possible effort for the purpose of keeping the grand Austro-Russian army in check, while Napoleon himself again attacked that of Silesia. He was particularly enjoined to conceal from the Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg all knowledge of Buonaparte's movement ; and for this purpose he was to cause a general shout through the ranks of, "*Long live the Emperor!*" as if the latter himself were present.

An employment of this nature, which was no less than to prevent the advance of a hundred thousand men with less than ten thousand, was doubtless difficult and must be honourable to the commander, who could prove himself capable of the task ; but Napoleon had confided it to Marshal Macdonald, who unites with intrepidity and coolness the rare talent of possessing an influence over his soldiers, through the medium of genuine attachment to him.

The same impetuosity, which had distinguished the first expedition of Buonaparte on the Marne, was employed at the beginning of the pre-

sent one—but what a difference as to the results! In the present instance Napoleon assisted towards the acceleration of his own ruin,

He left Troyes with his guard on the 27th, as above stated, and slept the same night at the little village of Herbisse, two leagues beyond Arcis-sur-Aube. On the following day, he took a direction on Sezanne by Fère Champenoise. On his march, the light horse of his guard had some skirmishes with the light troops of Tettenborn, which remained in the rear to watch the movements of the French army. This commander, being attacked by four thousand of Napoleon's Imperial guard, retired from Fère Champenoise to Vertus. On the same day (viz. the 28th) Buonaparte established his head-quarters at the castle of Esternay, situated between Ferte-Gaucher and Sezanne. This forced march of two days brought him again into the rear of the Silesian army; but the latter was three days' march in advance of him; and he was, moreover, ignorant whether the Marshal Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa had been able to assist and preserve Paris.

The French army left Eeternay on the 1st of March at five o'clock in the morning, and took the road of Ferte-Gaucher, where Napoleon halted several hours, in the hope of obtaining information, which could be relied upon, as to the movement and force of the enemy. All the reports, which reached him, concurred in stating that the

Allies were entire masters of the Marne, and that Soissons and Meaux were seriously menaced.

This information determined Napoleon to alter his course, by moving on Rubay and Jouarre, which he reached on the same evening; after a march rendered most fatiguing by the rainy season, and wretched state of the roads.

This rapid movement again exposed the two corps of Generals Sacken and York, who had approached from Meaux by the left bank of the Marne; but being now more upon their guard, and acquainted with the march of the French army, they passed in haste to the opposite bank, taking a direction from Ferte-sous-Jouarre to Lisey-sur-Ourcq, a small town three leagues to the north of Meaux. The district, through which they were now marching, is always inundated and miry; so that it would have almost swallowed up both men and horses, had it not been for a hard frost, which suddenly saved the Allies. Nearly thirty thousand men now rushed from the heights, and invaded all the country about Lisy, Crouy, and Gandelu. The inhabitants, terrified by the continually increasing number of the enemy, as well as the reports of devastation and massacre, which had been industriously propagated, betook themselves to flight, abandoning their houses and property. A great number sought refuge in the neighbouring quarries, hoping thus to elude the pursuit and pillage of the cossacks, who at this

time over-ran the country. The irruption had begun about nine o'clock at night. Complete darkness and heavy rain, mixed with hail, multiplied the difficulties and sufferings of the miserable fugitives. More than five hundred of them, consisting of both sexes and every age, were crowded together in a subterraneous pit. There, being compelled to take off their clothes, which were drenched with rain, the principal part of them were doomed to suffer the torments of hunger, and agonies the most dreadful. Let any one figure to himself this asylum of desolation, in which pregnant women, whose period of delivery had been accelerated by fear, were the prey of distress, terror, and despair, from the lamentable situation in which they were placed, and the absence of the aid which they so much required. Ere long too the roar of cannon, the continued discharge of musketry, and the cries of death became audible, adding to the horrors of the scene. To the impossibility of being able to continue long in this mephitic atmosphere was added the fear of being sacrificed by the enemy—a fear less terrible, perhaps, than that of dying from suffocation or inanition. At length it became absolutely requisite to leave the pit, or perish; and the unhappy fugitives resolved in this extremity to throw themselves upon the mercy of the first advanced-guard. What was their surprise and joy, on sallying forth with this determination, to find themselves not at the discretion of their invaders, but in the midst of the

French army, which was marching in pursuit of the retreating enemy towards the north!

The Prussian corps, under the command of General Kleist, which had taken a direction on Meaux by the Soissons road, had been attacked by the Marshal Duke of Treviso on the 28th of February, at the village of Gue-a-Treme on the little river Teroenne, and driven back several leagues at the point of the sword.

About the same time, the corps of Generals York and Sacken, after having crossed the Marne, had attempted the passage of the Ourcq, after several combats, on the part of the advanced guard, with the corps of Marshal Marmont, at Crouy and Lisy. Astonished at the resistance opposed to them, the two allied generals were about to form a junction, and attempt to force a passage, when Field-Marshal Blucher, who had received certain information of Buonaparte's arrival, and the enterprize he had in view, at once renounced the offensive, and resolved to join Generals Bulow and Wintzingerode, under the walls of Soissons. It was after having driven the grand allied army from Troyes, that Buonaparte, in consequence of the same information, hastened with his choicest troops to renew his manœuvres in the rear of the Silesian army.

At the moment he was doing this, Marshal Blucher had issued orders to retreat, and his whole army filed towards Goissony by Ferte-Milon and Oulchy-le-Chateau. The advanced guard, which

was the corps of General Kleist, now became the rear guard, and covered the march of the army, bearing, throughout the 2nd of March, repeated attacks from the heads of the columns, which ardently pursued the Prussians. At Ferte-Milon, the contest became sanguinary on both sides; but the Dukes of Ragusa and Treviso, stimulated by the arrival of the army, pushed the enemy's rear-guard vigorously in the direction of Soissons.

On the same day (viz. the 2nd of March) Napoleon arrived at Ferte-sous-Jouarre, and ordered the bridges to be re-constructed, which the enemy had destroyed. After a march of two days more he fixed his head-quarters at Fismes, on the road to Rheims, where he believed himself on the point of repeating his favourite manœuvre and familiar combination, by turning the enemy and deciding the fate of the campaign, as it were, in a single day.

His arrival at Fismes brought the main force of the French on the flank of the Silesian army, which was thereby placed in a critical situation; for Soissons was defended by twenty pieces of ordnance and fourteen hundred Polish troops; thus barring all access on the part of the allied army. It being impossible to cross the Aisne at this point, no means of retreat were open, and consequently nothing remained but to fight the French under great disadvantages, with the town in front, the corps under the Dukes of Ragusa and Treviso in the rear, and on the right flank the

forces of Napoleon, who hastened to make an attack, but was deceived in his expectation. Generals Bulow and Baron de Wintzingerode having met before Soissons on the 2nd of March, made menacing dispositions, and decided to carry the town by assault, which they accordingly invested by twenty-five to thirty thousand men. The commandant, not being able to form a correct judgment as to the general state of hostilities, merely considered the particular situation of a place without fortifications, and re-attacked by an army which had before conquered it, after having broken through all the barriers of the north. Actuated by these considerations, he entered into a negociation with General Bulow, and agreed to surrender Soissons, if an honourable capitulation were granted, by which the garrison was left at liberty to retire on Villers-Cotterets with its artillery and baggage.

So fortunate a convention for the Allies had, in their present serious situation, the most decisive results. Napoleon was about to march from Fismes on Mery, in order to turn Blucher's army, when he learnt that Soissons had opened its gates to the Allies. The fury, which transported him, was incapable of being appeased even after a victory, and he thus vented his indignation through the medium of an official bulletin:—"The enemy thought himself lost," said Buonaparte, "till he learnt that the bridge of Soissons was in his possession, the destruction of which had been omitted

through an act of cowardice not to be defined. The general, who commanded at Soissons, abandoned the place in virtue of a capitulation, which he calls honourable. He is consigned to trial by a court of enquiry, together with all the members of a commission, to whom the defence of the town was entrusted." In Napoleon's opinion these officers were the more culpable, because, throughout the 2nd and 3rd of March, the cannonade of the French must have been distinctly heard at Soissons, and consequently it must have been evident that relief was approaching.

During the night of the 3rd, however, the army of Silesia had effected, at Soissons itself, a junction with the corps of Baron de Wintzingerode and General Bulow, and passing freely over the uninjured bridge, had taken a position upon an extensive plain, behind the town, with its right resting on the village of Laffraux, and its left on Craonne.

The corps of Marshals Marmont and Mortier, after having followed and harassed the allied army in its march from the Marne to the Aisne, and after having received a considerable reinforcement of cavalry, attempted, on the 5th of March, to re-take Soissons. The town, which is situated on the side of the Aisne, opposite to the position recently taken by the Allies, was defended by five to six thousand men, belonging to the Russian corps commanded by General Langeron, but now under the immediate orders of General Rudzwick. This

was doubtless a sufficient force to defend the place, though Soissons was only surrounded by a broken wall, and a moat accessible at several points.

The French troops began their attack at six o'clock in the morning, and immediately gained possession of the suburbs to a considerable extent. Following up this success, strong columns marched on the town itself from two opposite sides; but were repulsed in both their assaults. Nevertheless, as they still remained in possession of the suburbs, they threw the covering from the roofs of the houses, and kept up a continual fire from these elevated quarters on the Russian soldiers, who occupied the ramparts. Night alone put an end to this murderous contest, which cost the Russians above a thousand killed and wounded, and the assailants an equal number. Only a few houses divided the combatants. The Russians waited for the return of day, expecting and holding themselves in readiness for a renewal of the attack; but Soissons was not the object of Buonaparte's expedition and efforts. Though the reduction of this place had rendered the most essential part of his plan abortive, he persisted, nevertheless, in the resolution of manœuvring on the flank of the hostile army, after having turned it at the distance of several leagues on the right of Soissons. In consequence of this determination, he rallied the separate corps of the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa, which, on the 6th of March, abandoned the attack of the town to march up the Aisne on their right.

The allied army immediately left the direct road of Laon, and leaned towards the left, for the purpose of opposing the progress of the French, and covering Laon in this direction.

The day before, Napoleon had marched from Fismes on Bery-au-Bac, where, after having caused the dragoons of General Nansouty to carry the bridge by main force, before the enemy had time to destroy it, he had effected the passage of the Aisne with his army. The division of the enemy's cavalry, destined to cover the bridge, was driven several leagues on the road to Laon with excessive vigour. The French obtained two pieces of cannon on this occasion, and made many prisoners, among whom was Colonel Prince Gagarin. At the same time strong columns filed, on the Rheims road, towards Corbeny and Laon.

Every thing announced a general battle, between the last-mentioned place and the Aisne, in the triangle, of which the road from Soissons to Rheims forms the base, and Laon the summit.

It was then that Field-Marshal Blucher conceived a manœuvre, which, without endangering the main body of his force, might be of decisive consequence. He fixed his army in *echelon*, from the plain of Craonne to the approaches of Laon; then forming a detachment of ten thousand horse, which constituted nearly the whole of his cavalry, he directed General Wintzingerode, with this force, to march by the roads of Chevrigny and Presle, at the opening of the plain behind Bouconville,

and towards the road from Corbeny to Laon, in order that he might there throw himself upon the French line of communication. This bold manœuvre threatened to turn Buonaparte, at the very moment that he meant to attack the position of Craonne. The two Prussian corps, under Generals Kleist and York, were destined to protect and follow the movement of the cavalry; and that of General Sacken was to support the infantry of General Wintzingerode. General Bulow, with twenty thousand men, formed a reserve, ready to occupy the position of Laon, which secured a retreat to the army, in case of a reverse. Such were the dispositions made by Field-Marshal Blucher to oppose his formidable adversary.

On this same day (viz. the 6th of March) Napoleon had moved on Corbeny, and, at a short distance from that place, had found the Russian infantry posted on the heights in front of Craonne. Strong detachments of riflemen, supported by artillery and covered by the woods of Corbeny, had approached the enemy, but were immediately repulsed. Two battalions of the guard, however, having turned the right of the position, while Marshal Ney attacked the farm of Urtubise, the Russians fell back, and took, in the night, a still stronger position upon the heights, behind the villages of Saint Martin and Craonne. On the 7th, at break of day, Napoleon caused this situation to be reconnoitred, and it appeared of unusual strength. The right and left of the enemy rested

on two ravines, and a third covered his front; so that there was no approach except by a narrow defile, which united the position to the plain of Craonne; but nothing could damp the ardour of Napoleon, and he made immediate arrangements for the attack.

Field-Marshal Blucher, perceiving, on his part, that the French army had ceased to march in a right line on Laon, ordered General Kleist and York to effect their movement in the direction of Presle and Leuilly, for the purpose of supporting the ten thousand cavalry under General Wintzingerode, and effecting the attack on the right flank of the army, if it advanced on the point occupied by the infantry before Craonne. General Sacken, who supported this first line, had orders, if pressed by a superior force, to fall back towards Laon, and increase his strength by taking the garrison of Soissons.

Blucher hastened on his charger to the immense detachment of cavalry, which he destined to turn the French army, wishing to direct this decisive manœuvre in person, but unforeseen difficulties, such as steep declivities, &c. impeded the progress of this nocturnal movement, and on the following morning, the cavalry had proceeded no further than Presle, without being able to reach the flank of Napoleon's army, which was merely annoyed by the cossacks. General Kleist's infantry had been equally impeded by local difficulties, and had taken another direction; so that it became

impossible for the Field-Marshal to undertake his offensive movement with success.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning, when Napoleon commenced the attack with his whole force, estimated at fifty thousand men; directing all his efforts towards the point which was occupied by Baron de Wintzingerode's infantry. In the absence of this general, Count Strogonoff commanded in chief, and Count Woronzow was at the head of the infantry. The Russians were exposed to a most impetuous charge. While Marshal Ney moved, on the right, to attack the position of Craonne, the Marshal Duke of Belluno, with two divisions of the newly-levied guard, took a direction on the Abbey of Vauclair, in order to pass the defile in that quarter.

The abbey was soon in flames, and the enemy expelled from it. The Duke of Belluno's corps crossed the ravine, which was guarded by fifty pieces of ordnance, and immediately formed again upon the heights. At that moment the Marshal was struck by a ball. A great number of his men had fallen by the determined fire of the Russians, but his columns were followed by numerous trains of artillery, under the command of General Drouot, who also passed the defile, and a strong body of cavalry likewise repaired thither to support the attack. A frightful cannonade took place in the valley, and on the heights. The Russians opposed a firm resistance to the French at every point. At the commencement of the action Count

Strogonoff saw his son fall dead at his side. Three other Russian generals were seriously wounded, and five of General Woronzow's staff were either killed or wounded.

Marshal Ney had passed the ravine on the left, and moved on the right of the enemy, while Generals Grouchy and Laferriere, at the head of the cavalry, crossed the defile amidst a shower of cannon-shot and musket-balls. Both were wounded in this attack, and their places taken by other generals. General Nansouty was more fortunate, and passed the ravine on the right of the Russians, followed by two other divisions of cavalry, without sustaining so much loss. The fire of the French batteries, nevertheless, made considerable havoc in their ranks, and dismounted fourteen of their cannon. Seeing themselves turned, and pressed on all sides, they began to think of retreating. In vain did Napoleon, who during the battle had redoubled his activity, endeavour to complete the victory by a general charge of his cavalry. The movement failed, while the Russian troops immediately formed, and under the direction of General Sacken, effected their retreat towards Laon, with admirable regularity and coolness. Not a single piece of ordnance, not a single carriage was left in their rear; and the prisoners hardly amounted to sixty, though the number of killed and wounded was above two thousand. The loss of the French was nearly the same, they having been exposed above an hour to the fire of the Russian musketry

and artillery, the last of which was served with as much celerity as precision.

Thus the battle of Craonne, though sanguinary from the ravages made by the artillery, was in fact only a partial engagement, though it would have been converted into a general and decisive battle, if Marshal Blucher's cavalry had been able to manœuvre, according to the plan of that commander. As it happened, however, the day produced no result, for the possession of the field by the French was the only reward, and the only sign of victory. Napoleon was enraged; and it is affirmed, that he exclaimed after the battle, "I plainly perceive that this war will prove an abyss, in which we shall be swallowed up, but I will be the last."

It became now requisite either to abandon the pursuit of the Russians, or to move on Laon; an excellent position, where it was probable that all the troops of the enemy would concentrate. Napoleon was little acquainted with the difficulties of the ground, which the Allies had previously ascertained; but he was resolved to advance, and on the same evening fixed his head-quarters at Bray. This was a disastrous day for the French, partly on account of their losses and privations, and partly from the excessive cold which rendered their fatigues still more severe. The road to Paris was covered with carriages, which were transporting the wounded thither.

The army left Bray on the 8th of March, and

took a direction upon Ange-Gardien, a village about midway between Soissons and Laon. Buonaparte halted there some hours, and appeared uncertain as to the road he should take, till he was informed, towards evening, that the Russians had entirely evacuated Soissons, and concentrated at Laon. He determined, therefore, on moving towards that place, and transferred his head-quarters to Chavignon, at a distance of four leagues.

Till now he had formed uncertain notions as to the accidents, which must result from the nature of the country. All at once he recollected that M. Bussy de Belly, his former comrade in the royal corps of Engineers at Brienne, had a country house near Laon. M. de Belly had preferred this modest retreat, and the society of a mother whom he dearly loved, to the wealth and honors which he might doubtless have obtained, if he had solicited them with the meanness of a court flatterer. All private considerations disappeared before the eyes of Buonaparte; he had need of his ancient companion, and sent for him. The messenger departed, and M. de Belly appeared ere long in the presence of his former fellow-student, now become Emperor of the French. He gave correct answers to the questions which Napoleon put, as to the topography of the department of the Aisne, and threw particular light upon the military position of Laon. "I confer on you the rank of Colonel," said Buonaparte, satisfied with the information. M. de Belly, not daring to refuse the proffered distinc-

tion, cast his eyes to the earth, and was silent. "I appoint you one of my aide-de-camps," continued Napoleon. "Sire," replied M. de Belly, "I am too much honored by such a distinction." In vain did he urge, with all the deference which the power of a despot inspires, that he had a mother who was the object of his tender affection, and who required, from her advanced age, all the assistance he could render. In vain did he urge that she was passionately fond of his rural retreat, and accustomed to his habits. "Your mother must leave the country," said Napoleon, imperiously, "I give you fifty thousand francs for her support, and five hundred louis a year for yourself. Go, and make your arrangements." This may be called *buying a man.*

Far from being deterred by the difficulties of the position at Laon, they only the more incited Napoleon to make the attack. Marshal Ney was gone with the advanced guard, to the village of Etonville, one league from the position of Chivi, which General Woronzow occupied with seven or eight Russian battalions. It was the more difficult to be assailed, because the road was, for a league, flanked by impassable marshes; but in the night, Napoleon turned the enemy with two battalions of the veteran guard, which had moved by Charlevois. At two o'clock in the morning, he attacked the Russians at the point of the bayonet. They were roused by the shouts of "*Long live the Emperor,*" and had only time to fall rapidly back on Laon for

the purpose of joining the other troops, which occupied that position.

On the following day (viz. the 9th of March) Napoleon marched from Chavignon on Laon, with the main body of his army.

This ancient town, which is situated at the distance of thirty-three leagues from Paris, covers the greatest part of an eminence, and commands a vast plain, which is studded with villages and small woods. The rest of the elevation is covered with a number of wind-mills, and a venerable castle, which was once a residence of our kings. General Bulow's corps, forming the centre of the combined army, occupied the town itself; the rest of the army was posted in the plain below, on the right and left of the high ground, facing towards Soissons; and the cavalry was behind, in reserve. The left wing, which was composed of Prussians, extended to the village of Athies; and the right wing, which was formed of Russians, rested on the hills between Thiers and Laneuville. At the distance of a league from the town, the plain is narrower, and bordered on the South and East by a double chain of lofty eminences, intersected only by a marshy dale, through which flows the little river Lette.

TheFrench army could not arrive at Laon, from the Soissons direction, without passing through this sort of defile; a road full of obstacles to the progress of troops, from its abounding in mire and swamps, and in all respects a most unfavorable situation for an attack.

Nevertheless, on the 9th of March, at break of day, the French occupied the ground before the town, between Semilly on the Soissons road and Aippes near Athies, beyond the road to Rheims. Napoleon caused all his columns to advance towards the centre and on the left, and being favoured by a thick fog, which concealed his movements, he seized the villages of Semilly and Ardon, situated under the town itself, of which they may be considered the suburbs. A firing of musketry was kept up without interruption till towards eleven o'clock, and reached the walls of Laon. The fog then began to disperse, and Field-Marshal Blucher perceived, from the heights, that the French were in force behind the villages of Ardon, Semilly and Leuilly, having in reserve many columns of infantry and cavalry on the road from Soissons, and a strong battery near Semilly, the fire of which could not be silenced by the Allies. He immediately ordered the combined cavalry of the rear-guard to advance, and turn the left flank of the French army. Trains of artillery were also brought forward, while the Russian corps of Generals Sacken and Langeron were posted in reserve.

At the same time, General Count Woronzow detached himself from the right wing, marched with his infantry, and pushed forward too battalions of *chasseurs*, who drove the French advanced posts out of Semilly, and held Napoleon's left in check till the allied cavalry arrived. The Field-Marshal also sent part of General Bulow's corps to the vil-

lage of Ardon, which the French in like manner abandoned, after having endured a smart fire nearly half an hour.

This double retreat, by the centre and left of the French army, was the result of Napoleon's orders. Deeming the front of the position at Laon to be impregnable, he himself had commanded the retrograde movement of his troops, and while stationed at the village of Arselle, had passed part of the day in seeing his men retreat upon Chavignon. But this was merely a feint, either for the purpose of enticing the enemy into the plain, or with a view to some more serious attempt. His generals were convinced that, if he renounced the attack in front, he would at least direct the troops of his right wing on the left extremity of the Allies, in order to cut off the Vervins road, and render a retreat by the North impracticable.

The Marshal Duke of Ragusa, after having marched on the 8th to Corbeny, pursued his way by the road from Rheims to Laon, with an advanced guard of sixteen infantry battalions, supported by cavalry and flying artillery; hoping to render it impossible that the combined army could pass by the Marle road. At his approach, the Prussians abandoned the village of Veslud. The Duke of Ragusa then attacked the advanced posts of General York's corps, constituting the left wing of the enemy, and having caused a formidable park of artillery to play, which consisted of forty pieces of ordnance, he continued his movement, anticipating complete success. His column made an im-

petuous attack on the village of Athies, which was defended by Prince William of Prussia. According to the account of the Allies, his Royal Highness met the French half way, and repulsed them; but Buonaparte, in his vague and obscure bulletins, asserts the contrary. The work of an intelligent officer, which has more than once served me as a guide, affirms that the position of Athies was actually seized, and occupied by the Marshal Duke of Ragusa. This fact is also confirmed in another memoir, communicated by an officer of the Prussian staff, from which it appears that General York, being obliged to fall back behind Athies, burnt the village to insure his retreat. Field-Marshal Blucher, being informed of the check on his left wing, immediately reinforced it with twenty-four squadrons, and some horse-artillery, belonging to the corps of Baron de Wintzingerode.

The Duke of Ragusa was scarcely established in the village of Athies, when a mass of the enemy's cavalry put in practice, against his troops, the manœuvre which had not succeeded at Craonne; for, about seven o'clock in the evening, the cossacks, with a general "*Hourra,*" surprised his park of artillery, spreading disorder and dismay through the whole left wing.

It was in vain that the Duke of Ragusa resorted to every effort, in order to save his ordnance, the cossacks found time to carry off thirty pieces of cannon. At this period too, Prince William of Prussia, in concert with Generals Horn and Zie-

then, and followed by the corps of Generals York and Kleist, resumed the offensive; manœuvring on the flank and rear of the French. The Prussians, who were forbidden to fire, rushed forward with the bayonet, and carried other batteries, which had only fired once.

The conscripts, terrified by this nocturnal surprise, fled in all directions, taking shelter in the woods; nor did they rally again in any number till several days had elapsed. Forty-six pieces of cannon, fifty waggons, and nearly two thousand prisoners, belonging to the corps of Marshal Marmont and the Duke of Padua, remained in the power of the Prussians. This unexpected check entirely disconcerted the plans of Napoleon, but all his dispositions were made for a regular and general attack on the morning of the 10th, and orders were issued, from his head-quarters at Chavignon, that the position of Laon was to be turned on the right and left, at the same time that it was attacked in front.

Nothing could be more hazardous than this attempt, if it was not absolutely impossible to achieve the object in view. Half the army might perish in trying to force its way up the ascent; and in case of a reverse, no other retreat was open but a defile, which was three leagues in length, and surrounded by swamps; but in spite of all these obstacles and dangers, Napoleon seemed as if he could not abandon his project of attack, thinking, no doubt, that the moral effect of a retreat would

be equivalent to a lost battle. Full of this idea, he caused his army to march under the walls of Laon. General Charpentier, with a division of National Guards, seized the village of Clacey on the left of the position. A wood in its vicinity was taken and retaken several times, and remained long in the possession of the French. The infantry of the Russian General, Woronzow, was engaged at that point. In the centre and on the left, the French conducted themselves with unabating intrepidity all day. About an hour before sun-set, Napoleon, assailed by mournful reflections, endeavoured to push forward a corps of riflemen, supported by two battalions of infantry, the rest of the centre and the left wing remaining in reserve. The village of Semilly was again attacked; but two Prussian battalions, belonging to the corps of General Bulow, having posted themselves on the road, supported by two cross fires on each flank, the French riflemen were obliged to retire with loss.

This was Buonaparte's last attempt on Laon. Disconcerted by the surprise and check, which his left wing had experienced on the preceding day; having learnt that this wing was pursued on the road to Rheims by the corps of Generals York, Kleist, and Sacken, and being convinced that it was impossible to dislodge a formidable army from so strong a position, he at length ordered a retreat. The French army fell back without molestation, except on the part of the advanced cavalry, of the

Allies, who followed as far as Chavignon; but the losses of the preceding day had enfeebled and discouraged it.

Napoleon returned to Chavignon, and employed almost all the night in causing his troops to continue their retrograde direction. The allied generals, from their elevated position, saw the fires of the French *bivouacs* on a long extended line.

Such was the *battle of Laon,* as it is termed by the enemy, though doubtless improperly; but it is probable that they use this expression, because they obtained before this town as important advantages as would have resulted from a complete victory; for, after two successive days of attack, Napoleon's force could make no impression on the bulwark, which this fine position formed.

Thus the army of Field-Marshal Blucher, which according to Buonaparte's accounts, had been annihilated at Champeaubert, Montmirail, and Vauchamp; and which, as he said, would have been utterly destroyed again, if it had not escaped at Ferte-sous-Jouarre and Soissons,—this army which he had beaten at Craonne, and thrown into disorder on Laon; which had been, during a fortnight, the object of his uneasiness and repeated attacks; which had been either marching or fighting the whole time, and yet continually increasing—this army now beheld Buonaparte in full retreat, but without its being possible to cast a shadow of imputation upon French valour. By

the enemy's own confession, no troops ever displayed greater heroism. In this rapid expedition, they had faced every danger, braved every fatigue, and endured every species of hardship and privation; but they were sacrificed to the delirious resolution of their leader, who with no more than thirty-five to forty thousand men, attempted to carry a position which was defended by more than sixty thousand, and deemed naturally impregnable, a position of which he evidently mistook the strength, after having committed a previous error in neglecting to occupy and protect it. Not satisfied with exposing his troops to every risk, he allowed them to expire from fatigue and want. In this respect the testimony of the allied generals may be again resorted to. They saw prisoners, who were taken during the final attacks on Laon, fall to the earth, and die from hunger and exhaustion in less than two hours; so that this man, who owed every thing to the courage of his armies, and who could not preserve his throne but by their exertions, instead of being a father to them, was a scourge.

CHAPTER XI.

The Grand Allied Army resumes the offensive.—Second battle of Bar-sur-Aube—Battle of Laubrecelles—The Allies re-enter Troyes—Marshals Macdonald, Victor, and Oudinot re-pass the Seine—March of the Hetman Platoff on Arcis and Sezanne—New treaty of Alliance signed by the Powers of the European league on the 1st of March—Re-capture of Rheims by Napoleon—Death of General Saint-Priest—Last conferences at Chatillon—Proposal of pacification—Counter proposal of Buonaparte—Rupture of the Congress—Views of the Confederated Sovereigns — Napoleon proclaims a war of extermination, and wishes to arm the people in his favour—His decrees against the Mayors of Towns—Proclamation of the Allied Generals against the war of extermination.

The French army was collected at Soissons on the 12th of March, and then manœuvred on the Aisne, followed only by the Russian corps under the command of General Wintzingerode, but it nevertheless, suffered some further loss as to its trains, horses, and equipage. Far from vigorously pursuing his adversary, Field-Marshal Blucher again separated his forces; and for some days occupied a line, which extended from Chauny to Corbeny and Craonne. The corps of General Baron Sacken was the only one which remained in the vicinity of Laon; it *bivouacked* round that place.

It was in vain that Napoleon attempted to palliate the serious check, which he had experienced. It was in vain that he endeavoured to make Field-Marshal Blucher appear, in the eyes of the French,

as defeated at Craonne, and arrested at Laon ; as marching without any regular plan, and hoping by a *hourra* of the cossacks to spread a panic, which would pave his way to Paris. Nothing could now escape the attention of the public. The truth was known, the result divulged ; and the retreat from Laon at once destroyed the moral effect of the victories, which had preceded it.

On the other side, the grand Austro-Russian army had availed itself of this fortunate diversion to resume the offensive. It had also gained signal advantages during the short interval of its movement from beyond the Marne ; and these advantages could not be concealed from the Parisians by the arts of Napoleon. In fact, the curiosity of the metropolis is almost always excited the more when government is silent.

On the 27th of February, the Generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, having learnt that the manœuvres of Blucher had caused Napoleon to divide his forces, and again move on the Marne, resolved to attack the corps of Marshals Victor and Oudinot, then in line before the town of Bar-sur-Aube, which the two armies disputed the possession of, during two days.

This place is situated in a strong valley, watered by the rivulet, from which the town takes its name. It is commanded by woody heights, which overlook the road to Troyes. General Wrede had entered it on the 26th, and on the ame day the French had again forced him from it

leaving in his possession nothing more than the suburbs beyond the Aube. At the moment of Napoleon's departure, the two French Marshals received from him a positive order to carry the heights of Bar with their united corps, which were supported by two divisions of cavalry, and by several regiments, arrived from Spain.

It was Buonaparte's object to anticipate the offensive movement of the Generalissimo, by dislodging the Allies from their position upon the Aube; the defence of which was confided to the 5th and 6th corps of their army, under the command of Generals Wrede and Wittgenstein. The two French Marshals debouched from the town with a combined force of eighteen to twenty thousand men; and exhibited an appearance, which might have caused a supposition of their being defended by another army of equal strength. They immediately caused a strong column to file up the heights of Arsonval, and into the woods of Levigny, in order to surround Count de Wrede's corps in its position behind Bar-sur-Aube. The Prince of Schwartzenberg, observing this, lost no time in supporting the Bavarians, by sending the Russian corps of General Wittgenstein, which was stationed near Colombey, and now received orders to attack the French columns as they moved on Levigny. Nothing, however, could stop the assailants, who advanced with intrepidity, braving the balls which flew in numbers among them, and overturning the Russians with irresistible

determination. The latter were finally obliged to fall back on the reserve, confided to Prince Gortschakoff; and the French remained masters of the woods as well as the heights. All the efforts of Marshals Victor and Oudinot were then devoted to the object of gaining the summit, which was become the centre and pivot of the enemy's position. They manœuvred to seize upon it, while bodies of cavalry charged the right wing of the Allies. Towards noon, however, the Russian columns, being strengthened on the centre by the arrival of all their troops, deployed, and caused their formidable artillery to play upon the assailants. The Prince Generalissimo availed himself of this decisive moment, and ordered a general attack on all the points, which the French were attempting to gain.

While the cavalry of General Pahlen, supported by Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg's division, was endeavouring to fall on the rear of the French Marshals, by the heights of Arcentieres and Levigny, the reserve of the Russian infantry and a division of *cuirassiers* made a charge, and drove them from the first summit. The conscripts, alarmed by successive and combined attacks, while the artillery were also spreading destruction, shrunk from the danger, and threw the columns into disorder. In vain did the different commanders try to rally them; in vain did the dragoons of General Milhaud make three charges to support the infantry. The battalions from Spain

displayed the most martial ardour, but they were overpowered. The Russian artillery had taken an excellent position, and caused dreadful slaughter. The cavalry was quite thrown into disorder. Whole regiments, particularly the 4th and 16th, were almost annihilated.

Strong masses, however, still maintained themselves on the heights of Arsonval; but General Wolkman, in concert with the Bavarian Colonel de Hertling, obtained this position after two attacks in flank. General Count de Wrede also made an assault at Bar-sur-Aube, seized the place, and thus completed the victory. The French columns now retreated; and being forced to abandon the defiles, were charged by the cavalry of General Pahlen, while passing over the bridge of Daulancourt; upon which they fell back in disorder on Vandœuvres, leaving the field of battle covered with the dead and wounded; and abandoning to the enemy two pieces of cannon, with eight hundred prisoners, among whom was Colonel Moncey, brother to the Marshal of that name. The indignant soldiers loudly complained of having been sacrificed in a rash enterprise, and sent into battle, while exhausted by fatigue and hunger.

It nevertheless required all the superiority of numbers, and all the perseverance of the Allies, to effect their triumph over French impetuosity. With such determination was the victory disputed, that in the heat of action, the Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg, and General Count Wittgen-

stein were both slightly wounded, when returning to the charge at the head of their columns. The second battle of Bar-sur-Aube would not have been a subject of regret to the French army, if Buonaparte had not in reality sacrificed this part of his force, in order to mask his movement on the Marne.

The Prince of Schwartzenberg passed the Aube on the 28th, pursued the French beyond it, and on the same day fixed his advanced posts of cavalry near Magny, and at Val-Suzenai.

This defeat was attended with the further inconvenience of again exposing the city of Troyes, and leaving Marshal Macdonald with his corps uncovered at Ferte-sur-Aube and Clairvaux. On receiving the dispatch, which conferred upon him the command of the forces opposed to the Austro-Russian army, he had no longer the means of either preventing or repairing the evil. The victory and the capture of Bar favored the movements of the enemy on all the points of the Seine and Aube, still occupied by the French troops. Marshal Macdonald had taken a position on the heights of Ferte-sur-Aube, which are unassailable in front; but since the 28th of February, Count Giulay had resumed the offensive, in consequence of having effected his junction with the fourth corps, under the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg. While the Prince was employed in making himself master of Clairvaux, General Count Giulay opened a false attack in front, forcing his way at the head

of several brigades, supported by the Austro-Russian cavalry, for the purpose of turning the right wing of the French.

A circuitous march over difficult ground retarded the columns of the Allies, but at noon, the brigade of General Czolick, rushing forward to the assault, sword in hand, obtained possession of the bridge at Silvarouvre, which Marshal Macdonald had caused to be barricaded. Every obstacle being surmounted, the entire column, as well as the cavalry, defiled under the fire of the riflemen. Scarcely had the Allies gained the opposite bank of the river, when they forced their way, at the point of the bayonet, to the heights, which the French attempted to defend by a vigorous resistance.

At the same moment that General Count Giulay turned the French, on the heights of Ferte, General Fresnel's artillery annoyed the front of their position. This general, forcing the bridge of the town, which he found broken, but immediately reconstructed, caused his troops to pass, and was thereby enabled to support the combined attack of Count Giulay.

It was at this decisive period that the Marshal Duke of Tarentum, having learnt the unfortunate issue of the battle at Bar-sur-Aube, made all his dispositions to effect his retreat towards Bar-sur-Seine in good order. Pressed on all sides, his rear-guard abandoned Ferte, and took a strong position on Pontelle and Saint Usage; but it soon

fell back to the wood beyond the village of Villars, being pursued without intermission by the Russian general Seslavin, who made several prisoners. During this retreat, Captain Larche, of General Grundler's staff, and Captain Angelieu of the northern national guards, remained in the power of the enemy.

On the 1st of March, Marshal Macdonald halted at Bar-sur-Seine, where his left wing was attacked by the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg on the 2nd. A French division wished to defend the passage of the Ourse; but being vigorously assailed, it fell back in good order, and took refuge in the town, under the protection of artillery. The marshal caused the neighbouring heights to be occupied, and from that station guarded the entrance of Bar till his retreat was ordered. His rear-guard stood firmly, and defended the approaches to the place for a long time; but the enemy arrived in force, and the superiority of his fire having driven all the posts into the town, a breach was made in the wall. A hundred volunteers directly darted through the aperture which the ordnance had formed; the rest of the column followed, and the town was taken, but the rear-guard of the French retired in safety.

The Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, being now master of Bar-sur-Seine, followed the corps of Marshal Macdonald on the Troyes road, as far as Maisons-Blanches. At this time, the two French corps, under the command of Marshals Victor and

Oudinot, had formed a junction, and were in a position along the Barce, upon the left bank, for the purpose of defending the bridges of Guillotiere. The Prince of Schwartzenberg, wishing to surmount the difficulties of an attack in front, ordered the Russian corps of General Wittgenstein to take a direction on Piney, and turn the left of the French, which rested on the villages of Laubrecelle and Toneliere, and thus menace their communication with Troyes. General Wrede was to wait the effect of General Wittgenstein's movement, and then to attack the bridges of Guillotiere, moving in front of the line of defence, while the Prince Royal was to attack the position occupied by the Marshal Duke of Tarentum at Maisons-Blanches, on the road to Burgundy.

The circuitous road, which General Count de Wittgenstein was compelled to take, did not allow him to arrive on the flank of the French army till three o'clock in the afternoon. His movement did not escape the observation of the Marshals; but they buoyed themselves with the hope of covering Troyes, by taking a position between that city and Laubercelle. This village, therefore, became the decisive point. It was furnished with troops, and the rest of the army was formed in battle array upon the plains between Laubercelle and Toneliere.

Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg began the attack with the Russian divisions of the advanced guard, by moving along the heights towards Lau-

bercelle, driving the French posts before him, and finally carrying the village at the bayonet's point, under the protection of a well-directed fire, but not without a spirited resistance and great carnage. Count Wittgenstein caused this movement to be supported by all the artillery of his corps; and Count Pahlen, on the right, menaced the rear of the French line with his cavalry. From this moment the French were broken, and their retreat took place in the greatest disorder.

At the same time, the Prince of Schwartzenberg ordered five Bavarian battalions to cross the Barce near Courteran, to establish themselves in a wood upon the borders of that river, and to put themselves in communication with the Russian columns. This movement was instantly executed. General Count de Wrede then vigorously assailed the bridges of Guillotiere, where the French, being turned, were no longer able to maintain themselves, and entirely surrendered the position. Marshal Oudinot was now menaced on all sides, and fell back with his corps on the great road to Troyes; but Count Wittgenstein's cavalry had passed the columns, and charged the French as they retreated. The fugitives rushed pell-mell into Troyes. Another detachment of Russian horse, pursuing the same road, fell upon a convoy of artillery and seized it. Ten pieces of cannon, fifty-four officers, and three thousand prisoners, among whom were nearly seven hundred of the veteran imperial guard, were, according to the official statement of

the Generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, the result of this day—a day most disastrous to the French arms, and which may be considered as a sequel to the unfortunate battle of Bar-sur-Aube. Still, however, the rear-guard kept firm possession of its post at Saint Parre, and the army being collected, though discouraged and beaten, filed during the night through the city of Troyes, taking the road of Nogent-sur-Seine.

The rear-guard alone took a position behind an arm of the Seine at Vacherie, resolved to maintain it, and to sacrifice, if necessity demanded it, one of the suburbs of Troyes, in order to arrest the progress of the enemy, and give the retreating troops time to reach beyond the danger of pursuit.

The allied troops were so harassed with fatigue that they could not form their columns of attack, on the 4th of March, before eight o'clock in the morning. As soon as they were in motion, Count Wittgenstein approached Troyes, intending to take possession of it by main force; but the French rear-guard, stationed at Vacherie, opposed him with a most determined fire. The columns of attack now deployed in the greatest order, while the Russian artillery soon silenced the fire of the French. Count Wittgenstein having summoned the city to surrender, the commander of the rear-guard sent an officer with a verbal but positive promise to evacuate the city in eight hours. The allied generals refused to allow so long a delay, and the fire of the artillery was redoubled.

A second officer arrived in a short time, and promised that the evacuation should be completed in half an hour. At the expiration of this time, the Allies penetrated into the city, but they found all the passages and avenues barricaded. The march of the troops being impeded by this circumstance, the Generalissimo, Prince of Schwartzenberg, collected all his light cavalry, and sending them round the walls of Troyes, put them in pursuit of the retreating columns.

The cossacks, and the Bavarian hussars, led by the Prince in person, encountered the French rear-guard in the plain of Malmaison, covering the road of Trainel and Nogent. They made several charges, which accelerated the retreat of the French; and before night came on, the heights of Legrez were in the power of the enemy. Darkness, however, and a dense fog put an end to the pursuit, and the beaten troops halted near Legrez, but without provisions, and altogether in the most deplorable condition.

In this rapid pursuit, the light horse made some prisoners; but nothing was neglected by the Marshals, which could secure the retreat, and diminish its attendant evils. The soldiery, indeed, ascribed their defeat and distress to Napoleon alone.

The fifth corps of the enemy occupied the city of Troyes, and the sixth took a position in front of Trainel, on the Nogent road. The same day (viz. the 4th of March) the station of Maisons

Blanches was seized by the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg, after having been evacuated by Marshal Macdonald, who was equally compelled to effect his retreat towards the Seine.

Out of nearly four thousand men, who had been wounded in the late actions, nine hundred were abandoned at Troyes, not being in a state that rendered it possible to convey them further.

On the following day, the Wurtemberg corps occupied cantonments between Troyes and Villeneuve-l'Archeveque, and its cavalry filed on the road to Sens, which place the Prince Royal entered on the sixth, but he found it almost deserted.

The head-quarters of the Allies were re-established at Troyes. The fifth and sixth corps having put themselves in motion towards Nogent, the French marshals, at their approach, abandoned the part of the town which is on the left bank of the Seine, after having burnt the bridge of boats which had been constructed there; but Bray and Montereau were armed, the marshals being resolved to defend the passage of the Seine at every point.

The grand Austro-Russian army made no serious demonstrations as to crossing this river; appearing to be satisfied with again occupying the whole country, situated between the Yonne, the Seine, the Aube, and the Marne.

While the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg reoccupied Sens, General Seslavin seized on Ton-

nerre, so that the French corps of Generals Vaux and Alix, consisting of two thousand infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, and eight pieces of cannon were obliged to fall back on Auxerre.

In another quarter, the Hetman Platoff obtained possession of Arcis-sur-Aube, which was defended by infantry only. The commandant of the garrison was taken on this occasion. Without stopping, the Hetman now took the road to Sezanne, where a detachment of the veteran imperial guard was stationed. General Kaisarow having caused some shells to be thrown into the place, the garrison, thus surrounded, and without a chance of relief, surrendered as prisoners of war. The Hetman then dispatched five hundred cossacks in the direction of Montmirail, sweeping the whole country between the Seine and Marne, by strong columns of light horse; maintaining the communication between the grand confederated army, and that of Silesia; and observing all the movements of the French army.

Thus were lost, in a fortnight, all the brilliant advantages, which Napoleon had before gained over the two hostile armies,—thus were lost, in a fortnight, all the districts which he had re-conquered as far as Troyes, and beyond it. These events confounded even those, who were so ready to deal in imposition. From this time the war appeared to be interminable. The contemptible minions and creatures of the court saw all their visions melt into air, and no longer proclaimed

either the defection of Austria, or the ignominious flight of the Allies beyond the Rhine. Their alarms were renewed, and they had no hope except in the conclusion of a treaty of peace; but this last gleam of sunshine, so necessary to cheer the sinking spirits of Napoleon's partisans, soon disappeared.

The progress of the negociations had been suspended or accelerated, according to the nature of military events, for nothing, in fact, could influence the determination of Buonaparte but the result of hostilities. The Allied Sovereigns, on the contrary, avowed principles, which were fixed; and even reverses did not induce them to depart from the general basis, which they had adopted. When Napoleon had obtained, almost under the walls of Paris, those successes, which inflated him, his plenipotentiary at the congress changed his tone, and the conferences assumed immediately another character. The tyrant, as we have already mentioned, disdainfully rejected the proposal of a preliminary treaty made by the the Allied courts, without, however, daring to sanction this arrogant conduct by any explicit notification. When he afterwards reflected on the subject, he felt too clearly that the victories of the Marne and Seine were by no means decisive; and that it was, therefore, still necessary to temporize. His plenipotentiary remained without instructions; and a fortnight elapsed without any answer or official communication being sent. It was in vain

that several Austrian envoys came in succession to his head-quarters, and besought him to concur in the general wish for a peace, that would secure the repose of the world. Napoleon's final idea was not to treat with enemies, while they occupied the French territory.

To be degraded by ignominious conditions, after having been defeated by force of arms, appeared to him incompatible with the source and nature of his power. The Allied Sovereigns, wishing to ascertain his views and intentions, allowed his plenipotentiary, at the Congress, the latitude of presenting a counter-proposition of peace; stipulating only that it should correspond with the spirit and substance of the conditions already laid down. Some delay became necessary, and the 10*th* of March was fixed upon, by mutual consent, as the period of coming to a determination.

It was after five unfortunate battles, that the Allies had digested and transmitted to the Congress their plan of pacification. They had also thought it necessary to draw the tie still closer by which they were united, and to redouble their efforts against the man, who proved himself so completely hostile to the repose of nations. For this purpose they entered into a formal engagement, by which they covenanted to bring six hundred thousand men into the field of battle. This new treaty of alliance, on the part of the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, the King of

Prussia, and the King of England, was signed on the 1st of March at Chaumont in Bassigny, to which place the Sovereigns and their ministers had repaired after their retreat from Troyes.

The high contracting parties solemnly engaged, each towards the other, that if Napoleon refused to coincide in the propositions made to him, they would employ all the means, afforded by their respective dominions, in a vigorous prosecution of the war; and that they would act in perfect concert, for the purpose of procuring a general peace, under the protection of which the rights and liberty of all nations would be re-established and secured. By the same treaty, Austria, Russia, England, and Prussia, covenanted to keep constantly in the field *a hundred and fifty thousand men each*, (exclusive of garrisons) to be actively employed against the common enemy.

Great Britain wishing to contribute in a manner the most prompt and decisive towards this great object, entered into a formal engagement to furnish a subsidy of five millions sterling, to be equally divided among the other three powers; but if unforeseen events, and the situation of the theatre of war rendered it difficult to send the stipulated number of English soldiers, his Britannic Majesty reserved to himself the right of furnishing his effective contingent in foreign troops paid by him, or to contribute annually an additional subsidy, at the rate of twenty pounds sterling a man for infantry, and thirty pounds for cavalry.

This treaty stipulated finally that the league should continue for twenty years, during which the contracting Powers reciprocally engaged to support each other. The last part of the agreement extended also to such other powers as might join the confederation.

Was this the conduct of sovereigns, who were disunited and without any regular plan, as Napoleon's agents and Napoleon himself unceasingly represented them? Far otherwise. Their perfect accordance of views and interests did not tend to slacken military operations; and from the 1st to the 10th of March, the Allied armies had resumed the offensive on the whole extent of their line from Laon to Lyons.

It is generally believed that Buonaparte had no knowledge of this treaty before the rupture of the Congress at Chatillon. It was on the 7th, two days before his ineffectual attempt on Laon, and immediately after the battle of Craonne, that he dispatched a courier with his *ultimatum.*

It seemed as if Fortune had a pleasure in perpetuating his illusions, for at the very moment that his arrogant pretensions were about to excite the indignation of the Congress, she smiled upon him at Rheims — but it was her last smile. He could not pardon this city *for having been so weak*, to use his own expression, *as to open its gates to a hundred and fifty cossacks, and treat them with hospitable kindness for a whole week.* "Our annals," added he, "will preserve the recollection of

those places, the inhabitants of which were deficient in what was due to themselves and to honour." From these words it was easy to infer that he only waited for an opportunity to exercise his vengeance.

Scarcely had he arrived at Fismes, beyond the Marne, when he detached a column to attack Rheims, under the command of his aide-de-camp General Corbineau, and the General of Cavalry Laferrière. On the 6th of March, these two officers surprised that place at four o'clock in the morning, by turning four battalions of the enemy, which covered the city, and which were made prisoners of war.

On receipt of this intelligence, General Saint-Priest, aide-de-camp to the Emperor Alexander, and commander-in-chief of the eighth Russian corps, resolved to advance and retake Rheims. After having passed the Marne at Vitry, this officer proceeded to Chalons-sur-Marne, where he was posted several days; having an advanced guard at Sillery, on the road to Rheims. His corps consisted of only six thousand men; but he was joined by General Jacow, who commanded the last column of the Prussian reserve. This addition, which amounted to seven thousand men, heretofore employed at the siege of Torgau and Wittemberg, raised the force of General Saint-Priest to fifteen thousand fighting men, the cavalry and artillery included.

On the 12th of March at five o'clock in the

morning, he divided his corps into several columns, approached the gates of Rheims, and made his principal attack upon that of Laon, which was forced in a few minutes. General Corbineau, being unable to oppose any efficacious resistance with troops so inferior as to number, put himself at the head of his cavalry, made a dash, and arrived with only a hundred men at Chalons-sur-Vesle; the rest of his troop being either destroyed or made prisoners. Ten pieces of cannon, twenty-five thousand men, General Lacoste, Colonel Regnier, and many officers of superior rank were taken by the enemy, whose loss was trifling, his attack having been pushed with extreme vivacity.

Napoleon was informed, on the same evening, that General Saint-Priest had taken Rheims by assault, and that the greatest part of the garrison, as well as the artillery, were in the power of the Allies. He directly formed a resolution of marching to that city; and on the 13th of March, at six o'clock in the morning, put his army in motion, leaving at Soissons no force beyond the Duke of Tarentum's corps. Marshal Marmont had also received orders, after the check at Laon, to take a direction upon Rheims; and had accordingly commenced his march from Fismes, thus forming the advanced guard of the French army. An aide-de-camp announced to him that the Emperor did not wish him to engage in action till the whole army had arrived; but his cavalry had just encountered two Prussian battalions at the

village of Rosnay, which, perceiving themselves surrounded, laid down their arms at the first summons. General Sebastiani was also in motion upon the great road, with two divisions of horse, supported by artillery.

On receiving the first intelligence that the French were advancing in force, the allied troops immediately left Rheims, and took a position upon the high ground, a quarter of a league in front of the village, at the side of the road which leads to Soissons. Thus crowning the hills, they determined to oppose the bold attack of the French by a vigorous resistance. Strong detachments of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, moved in advance; soon after which the French were perceived, in strong masses, and with a numerous train of artillery. On arriving within a quarter of a league of the position occupied by the Allies, their cavalry formed itself into lines. The advanced guards of the armies immediately engaged; and for several hours, the plain between the two positions was a scene of continued skirmishing and cannonade. The French horse, however, made no movement beyond an extension on both flanks of the line; appearing to defer its charge till the arrival of the infantry, which had not yet taken place.

Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, Napoleon arrived with his whole army. He immediately took a station on the heights, called Moulin-à-Vent, and gave orders for a general attack. A cruel smile appeared on his countenance, as he

turned his eyes towards the city, and rubbed his hands, exclaiming, "An hour hence the ladies of Rheims will be not a little alarmed."

The columns of cavalry and trains of artillery proceeded together, and a vigorous attack ensued upon two Russian battalions, which had advanced; but their fire was so well directed, and the behaviour of the troops so firmly intrepid, that the first charge failed, and the Russians fell back on their position without loss. Napoleon now caused all the trains of artillery to move forward, escorted by fresh troops. Fifty pieces of ordnance opened a frightful cannonade; and the Russians were long exposed to a destructive fire, which was far superior to their own. At the same time they saw a most formidable force displaying itself in front of them, but they firmly kept their ground. Meanwhile the French were repairing the bridge of Saint-Brice, in order to pass round the city. A strong column of cavalry moved on the right immediately. General Count Saint-Priest sustained this unequal combat on all the points, which were most exposed; facing every danger, and exhibiting, amidst a shower of cannon and musket-balls, a brilliant example to the chosen troops under his command. At this decisive moment he fell from his horse, mortally wounded, and was carried from the field of battle; by which event his soldiers were thrown into disorder and consternation. Napoleon, perceiving this, redoubled his efforts. General Defrance, at the head of the guards of ho-

nour, made an impetuous charge, between Rheims, and the enemy, on a brigade of Russian cavalry, commanded by General Emmanuel, who supported the infantry on the left. These troops made a brave resistance, but were overpowered by numbers. The Polish General Krasinski also turned the enemy on the road to Bery-au-Bac. The Russians, thus assailed on their left, while the right and centre were equally pressed, and fearing that their communications would be cut off, retired in disorder behind the city, for the purpose of gaining as soon as possible, the Laon and Chalons road.

A retreat like this, before so superior a mass of cavalry, could not be effected without loss. Seven pieces of Prussian and one of Russian ordnance, with a great number of soldiers, fell into the hands of the French on the road to Bery-au-Bac. The rest of the fugitives succeeded in reaching Neufchatel; but the entrance into Rheims was still defended by a detachment of infantry. The disputed gate being barricaded, the resistance was prolonged till nine o'clock at night.

Impatient to complete his victory, Napoleon at length proposed a capitulation to the small number of the enemy's troops, that still pretended to maintain possession of Rheims. They immediately retired; and at three o'clock in the morning, the conqueror made his entry.—It was the last triumph of his reign.

This brilliant day had cost him but little blood, and put him in possession of an important city.

Its results consisted of many cannon, as well as baggage waggons, artillery, and two to three thousand prisoners, partly taken on the road, and partly in the place itself. A great majority of the Russian and Prussian battalions, however, rejoined Field-Marshal Blucher in the neighbourhood of Laon.

It was certainly by no means a remarkable circumstance that a brave army had conquered fifteen thousand men, who were surprised and surrounded; but it excites astonishment that, after having experienced a most disastrous check at Laon, it should not have been sooner followed by the army of Silesia, which was superior in point of numbers, and the very appearance of which would have spared the Russians their defeat at Rheims.

Napoleon published a most exulting official account of this victory, so that the greatest exploit of which he could now boast was, that he had retaken a French city, at thirty-three leagues distance from Paris. It may be asked whether he had not likewise recovered Soissons, Troyes, Nogent, Sens, Arcis, and Bar-sur-Aube. Undoubtedly he had; but no sooner did he quit any one of those places, than it was re-occupied by a persevering enemy, whose numbers were immense. The theatre of hostilities became gradually more and more contracted. If Buonaparte succeeded in surmounting one difficulty, another and a more dangerous one presented itself. This dreadful war realized in some degree the hydra and its renovated heads

But the least success roused all the haughty nature of Napoleon; and that of Rheims afforded him an opportunity of making a sort of impious appeal to the eternal Judge, whom he so often insulted, and whose almighty power he was on the eve of proving. By a new attempt of charlatanism, his bulletin, dated from Rheims, announced, that the cannon-ball which killed General Saint-Priest, was fired from the same battery which proved fatal to the unfortunate Moreau near Dresden. Thus a piece of ordnance was pretended to be a special instrument of Providence, for the purpose of converting those Frenchmen, who were inimical to the usurper's cause.

Rheims was the centre of his operations for three days. Three corps of the French army established themselves on the three great roads which branch from it, in order to preserve both the city and the army itself from surprise. The Marshal Duke of Ragusa took a position at Bery-au-Bac, on the road to Laon; while Marshal Ney marched towards Chalons-sur-Marne. Soissons continued to be occupied by the Marshal Duke of Treviso; but the communications between that place and Rheims were not entirely free. Napoleon remained at Rheims on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of March, expecting the result of the conferences at Chatillon, which had been delayed a few days. The reports of peace were renewed during this short interval, and credited by the army. At head-quarters, indeed, it was thought that the treaty was actually

signed; and the confirmation of this intelligence was every moment expected from Paris.

It was on the 10th of March that Napoleon's plenipotentiary had engaged to lay before the Congress the *ultimatum*, or counter-proposition of his master; but whether the latter always expected to gain a battle, or whether he was continuing to invoke the particular intervention of Austria; or whether, finally, he had never sent the *ultimatum*, which is hardly to be presumed,—be this as it may, M. de Caulaincourt produced, at the expiration of the time agreed upon, nothing but documents, which far from approaching the object in view, only tended to prolong a fruitless negociation. At his request, however, a further delay till the 15th of March was assented to. This short interval was passed, on the part of the plenipotentiary, in continual hopes of some success, which would place Buonaparte in a more favourable situation; but the march of the French army on Laon, and the abortive efforts of Napoleon to carry this formidable position, had been attended with the most lamentable consequences, not only as far as regarded the impression made upon the minds of the soldiery, but also upon the minds of the ministers assembled at the Congress.

The Austrian cabinet only waited the event of the attack on Laon before it decided as to the peace; and it would perhaps, have been actually concluded, if, on the day after the action at Craonne, Napoleon had directed his army on Sois-

sons, and there awaited the effect of his last propositions; but his reverses at Laon destroyed, in the opinion of the Allies, the advantages gained at Craonne; and they now began to open their eyes as to the real strength of the French army, which they had hitherto never rightly known.

It is positively stated, that the Emperor of Austria, struck with the inability of the efforts made by his son-in-law, as well as the difficulties, into which his mad ambition had plunged him, again sent Prince Wenzel Lichstenstein, thinking that the moment was at length arrived, when peace might be effected. It is added that the Prince met Napoleon at Bery-au-Bac, and on being introduced into his presence, besought him, in the name of the Austrian Emperor, to join in an amicable arrangement; as an obstinate refusal would force his august father-in-law to leave him at the mercy of the Allied Powers, who, to avoid a civil war, would recal the Bourbon family. At these words Napoleon was silent for a moment, but in an evident state of irritability. At length he exclaimed: "That is a phantom which cannot alarm me. Perhaps you would force me to sign a disadvantageous peace; but it would be more the interest of Austria to grant me one of the nature that I wish; for should it be otherwise, I shall be forced in eighteen months to repass the Rhine." Here the conference ended. According to the same account, the Emperor of Austria, indignant at see-

ing every hope of peace vanish through the inflexibility of Buonaparte, exclaimed, "Be it so—he will lose his crown."

I will not affirm that these particulars are strictly authentic; but I am bound to record them, because they appear highly probable, and have, moreover, acquired a great degree of credit in the public opinion.

Be this as it may, on the 15th of March, the French plenipotentiary at length laid before the Congress his master's counter-proposition. Let any one judge, by Napoleon's pretensions at such a crisis, of the insatiable ambition, which guided this enemy of the human race.

He demanded that the Rhine should be his boundary; that Antwerp, Flushing, Nimeguen, and part of the Waal should be ceded to him; and that Italy, including Venice, should form a kingdom for his son, Eugene Beauharnois. He did not claim the absolute restitution of Holland; but he wished to render the independence of that country merely nominal. In addition to these enormous pretensions, he demanded indemnities for different members of his family, viz. for Joseph Napoleon, in lieu of the kingdom of Spain, which he had lost; for Jerome Napoleon, who was in a similar situation as to the kingdom of Westphalia; for Louis Napoleon, whom he had created Grand Duke of Berg, after first giving and then taking Holland from him; and finally, for

Eugene Beauharnois, in addition to the claim above stated, upon the ground of his having a right to the Grand Duchy of Frankfort.

This *ultimatum* was of so imperious and revolting a nature, that its effects, on the ministers of the Allies, may be easily imagined. "The misfortunes of France, then," said they, "have not changed the views of her chief. He still requires that nations, who are strangers to the manners, customs, and very character of France—nations, which whole ages of tyranny could not cause to adopt French habits—should continue to form a part of his empire In despite of force, in despite of reason, he wishes France to preserve dimensions incompatible with a system of equilibrium, and out of all proportion to the other great politic bodies of Europe. He wishes to preserve the possession of offensive points, by means of which he has, to the universal misfortune of Europe, overturned and erected thrones at his pleasure. What! Are the members of this obscure family, who have spread desolation and despair throughout the continent, to be treated as if they were of royal origin?—What! Is the government of Napoleon, which has hitherto made discord its basis, to remain in possession of power, that still enables him to be the arbiter of Europe? No. Unless Europe will submit to crouch at his feet for ever, his conditions must be rejected. The present is no ordinary war—it is not undertaken for the purpose of obtaining this or that portion of

terr tory—it is not undertaken to enforce this or that particular right—it is undertaken to defend the cause of the world. It is time that nations resumed their energy, and renounced an alliance, or rather a submission, destructive to civilization. The politics of states may float for a time, according to human passions; but these deviations are only momentary, and sooner or later every thing must resume the course, which experience and wisdom have pointed out. Let us not allow a haughty despot, then, to parcel out states, and distribute them according to his caprice, annihilating them by degrees one after the other, and subjecting them to his arbitrary domination. Let us re-establish an equilibrium, which will insure the repose of the civilized world. Such will be the great advantage of the system, which is generally termed the balance of power—a system incompatible with the preponderance of Napoleon. Can any durable peace, can any peace, founded on morality and good faith, ever exist with this tyrant? Supposing that he awoke from his dream of ambition, to the illusions of which he has so long surrendered himself—supposing that he ceased, for a moment, to disturb the tranquillity of the world, what power, what nation would venture to rely upon a treaty with a man, who inspires no sentiment but suspicion and distrust? Is it not he, who has converted war into a physical calamity, without termination, and without any moral purpose? It is against this horrible system of carnage

and desolation that reason, justice, and humanity appeal. In continuing the negociation under such auspices, the allied courts would be wanting in what they owe to themselves. They would renounce the glorious object which they have in view; and their efforts would be directed against their own subjects. By signing a treaty on the bases of Napoleon's counter-proposition, they would place their arms in the hands of the common enemy, and would betray the universal confidence reposed in them."

These considerations prevailed, and the Congress was dissolved. "History," said the best of kings on a subsequent occasion *, "History will for ever record that, within the walls of Chatillon, Providence displayed, in the most striking manner, its designs as to France."

At a moment so decisive, the Allied Sovereigns renewed the solemn engagement never to lay down their arms 'till they had attained the grand object of their alliance. The French nation could ascribe to no one but Buonaparte the evils, which it was doomed to endure. Even on the 15th of March he was at liberty to have accepted the sovereignty of France, as it was in 1792; but he rejected with disdain every proposition founded on a reasonable basis, and did not even deign to justify his refusal in the eyes of the abused nation.

* Reply of Louis XVIII. to the deputation of the city of Chatillon-sur-Seine.

What had he to place in opposition to all Europe united, without the possibility of retraction, against him? A brave army, no doubt; but reduced to forty or fifty thousand men. His enemies considered the rupture of the conferences as the prelude of his downfal; but his partisans, and he himself still dreamt of triumphs; relying principally on a war of extermination, provoked by sanguinary decrees and shameless emissaries. Every exertion was used to arm the population, both in town and country. Bands of robbers were secretly organized, and assuming the semblance of cossacks, committed, under the colours of the enemy, all sorts of excesses, which were calculated to excite despair and vengeance on the part of the French. Various other machinations were resorted to, and imposition was practised to an unlimited extent. The authorities of those places, which were situated in the districts now become the theatre of war, were ordered to Paris by Napoleon's ministers, who suggested, and in some cases dictated to them reports, abounding with exaggerations and hyperbole, as to the cruelties and devastations of the enemy. The publication of these dreadful recitals tended to make the French consider the Russians and Prussians as cannibals. To such excess was the imposition carried, that the cossacks were reported to have seized the fattest children for the purpose of consigning them to the spit, and afterwards devouring them at their horrible banquets.

During his expedition from beyond the Marne, Napoleon displayed his infernal policy. From his head-quarters at Fismes he issued several revolutionary decrees, the object of which was not only to rouse the energies of the people, but also to excite a war of extermination. Perceiving that the Allies retorted on him those terrible practices, which had ever marked his progress in the countries occupied by his arms, he declared that he would resort to reprisals upon the spot, and have his prisoners shot. This decree he caused to be inserted in his bulletin of laws, as if to furnish posterity with authentic evidence of his own infamy.

By another decree he proclaimed, as traitors to the country, all mayors, public functionaries, and other persons, who, instead of encouraging the people to take up arms, *dissuaded* them from adopting that measure. The terrible extent, to which this decree might operate, attested at once the ferocious character of Buonaparte, and the desperate situation to which he was reduced. He placed the people and the constituted authorities between the vengeance of the enemy, and his own denunciations of death What was his object? That the French, henceforth deprived of resources, should have no other alternative but to side with him. He wanted soldiers, and he thought that the best mode of procuring them was by reducing the nation to the last extremity of despair. Such was his object in trying to renew the levies *en*

masse, which the conventional proconsuls, even during the reign of terror, had avowed to be disastrous and useless; but it was of little importance to him if the enemy spread desolation from one end of France to the other, provided he reigned over the ruins. The following *trait* will suffice to attest, in this respect, the fatal perversity of his soul. "Sire," said one of the generals, when congratulating him on the victory of Montmirail, "what a glorious day, if one did not see so many ruined towns and villages around us!"—"So much the better," replied the hard-hearted tyrant—"they will supply me with the more soldiers."

His decrees of extermination provoked threatening declarations and lamentable reprisals. The Generalissimo Prince of Schwartzenberg expressed himself in the following terms, by a proclamation on the 10th of March: "Frenchmen, your government wishes you to rise against us, and endeavours to mislead you by fallacious promises, as well as by other measures which betray its weakness. Never have the Allies entertained a design of conquering France; but they will not make peace, except upon conditions which secure to all Europe durable repose. This peace, so necessary to the universe, they are obliged to obtain by conquest. New battalions cover the roads from Germany, Belgium, Spain, and Italy. Peace alone can deliver the French territory from the presence of the allied armies. Frenchmen, raise your voices in favour of this measure. Reflect that all, who resist our

arms, will expose themselves to inevitable destruction."

Another proclamation, to the same effect, was published at Laon, on the 13th of March, by Field Marshal Blucher. "Frenchmen," said this commander, "attempts are made to impose upon you by false statements. Napoleon only wishes to prolong the war at the expense of your property, and the last drop of your blood. If excesses have been committed, it is because several of our soldiers have been massacred by the deluded inhabitants. I have, however, checked these excesses, and even punished them with death; but I likewise declare that, painful as I shall feel it to confound the innocent and the guilty, I will henceforth cause every town and village to be burnt, the inhabitants of which dare to take up arms against my troops, and impede my military operations. We have no wish beyond the peace and repose of Europe. This is the principle that guides every one of the confederated nations; therefore the issue of the war cannot be dubious. Frenchmen, a longer resistance will only aggravate your misfortunes."

These declarations were strengthened by still more direct arguments, which tended to leave Buonaparte like a solitary individual, amidst so many millions whom he called his subjects. He would not restore the countries which he had no right to, for his temporary occupation was an act of violence; and now by obstinately refusing all rational terms of accommodation, he was upon the point

of losing not only those countries, but every thing else that he valued.

None of the events, however, which occurred in the theatre of war, hitherto displayed to the reader — neither battles, nor insurrections, nor sieges, nor assaults, nor menaces, nor proclamations, appeared sufficient to effect the arrival of the great crisis. The glory of being the first in taking those steps, which saved the country, was reserved for the south of France, of which we will treat in the succeeding volume.

THE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASVATI MAHAL. * THE TAN

END OF VOL. I.